

Visual studies 1. Week 9. Monday 16th Nov 2020. Tracy Thompson.

Part 2: Weekly 2 hour Drawing Assignments. Format, Composition and Collage. (take more time over these exercises if you wish, the times set are a guide).

Introduction

In the past four weeks, you have gained a good grasp of line quality, texture, looked at format and have become aware of the space around your subject (negative space). You are also becoming more aware of the story in your reportage project. There may be emotional aspects to your story you want to explore. Being more aware of your format and composition can help you express and reinforce the emotional content of your illustrations. This week we will focus on different formats and the way the placing of components (subjects/objects) within a format can change a composition to create more or less drama in an image. We will also look at contrast, large empty areas contrasting with clusters of detail to make interesting images.

Brief

You have all been confined in your rooms in lockdown but you can make the simplest of still life compositions interesting visually. The process of using collage can help you focus and reinforce the awareness of the positive and negative space.

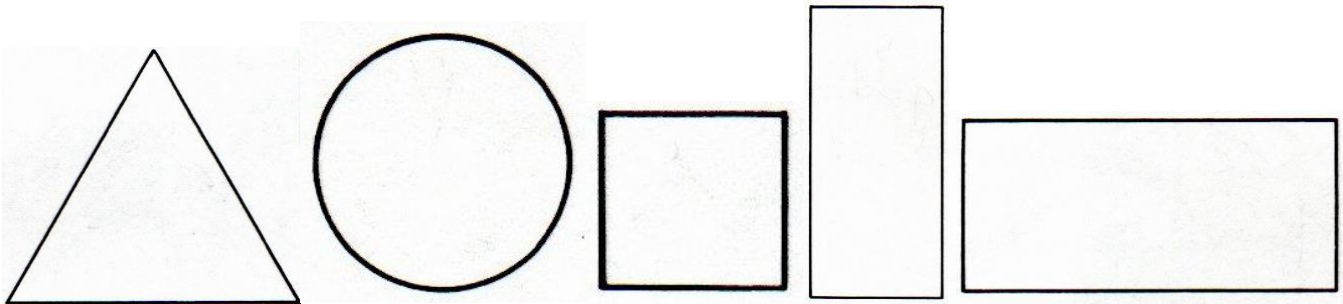
This week in the final exercise you will work on a collage. Traditionally, I think people are put off by collage because they remember sticking lots of little bits of paper randomly to a sheet of paper at school, but collage can make you become aware of the composition of your image. This can be a very helpful quick sketching method of arranging components within a format in varying ways to see how different compositions can change the dynamics in an image.

Exercise1. Duration 1 hour. Six exercises, each 10-mins long. Extending the understanding of Format.

Below are five different shapes (plus one of your own choice). I want you to choose an object/s to draw. This can be related to your reportage project or not. Draw the same object/s six times within the different shapes set out below including the shape of your choice. (Don't do this on the brief you will need to draw them out separately on sheets of paper)

With each format shape you use, I want you to think carefully about where you place the object within the format. Make sure you take care over your drawings, this is still a time to draw with careful observation and can be used as a warming up exercise. If you wish, you can practice the blind, semi-blind or continuous line methods of drawing and be aware of consciously experimenting with mark making. You have 10 minutes to do each study.

Notice how each composition might create a different emotion or feel to the image. Whereas in one of the formats an object might indicate a sense of space and freedom in another format it might look cramped, contained and claustrophobic. You could also experiment with the scale of the object. This ability to compose an image is important and choosing a format to suit the message you are trying to get across in your image is also important. How you represent your subject compositionally can change the mood and emotional content of your image.



a Triangle; b Circle; c. Square; d Tall portrait; e Long landscape; and f a shape of your choice, it could be a regular octagon or a distorted rectangle, a diamond, an ordinary rectangle, or a random shape etc. it is up to you. Please note these illustrations are a guide you can work with them at any scale you wish.

Exercise 2. Duration 10 minutes. Four x 2 ½ minutes for each sketch. You can take longer if you wish. Working out the composition for your final collage.

You will need to decide what you would like your final collage image to be. A still life, a figure in the room, a view from the window? The subject can be related to your reportage project.

Having experimented with different formats I want you to choose one of the formats you enjoyed working with. You can choose any one of the shapes utilised above or the one of your own choice. In this exercise, you are to do four 2 ½ min sketches working out the placement of the components to create four different compositions within your chosen format. For example; if you decide to use a square draw your square out four times. Do four different compositions within that format you have chosen.

Look for the details in contrast to the big open spaces in your composition. Look at focal points of the figure or still life within the format, carefully consider the placement of components. Think about where you will place the subject/s in your image, how much depth do you want in the image do you want to have pronounced perspective or be quite flat and decorative? Think about the far distance middle ground and foreground. Think of differing viewpoints; looking down, looking up at the subject, try changing the scale. Which of the compositional sketches do you feel works best, not only for a collage but also in terms of its visual interest.



Examples of artist's methods of working out compositions.

Exercise 3. Duration, 50 minutes to an hour. Collage, becoming aware of space and detail in your image. You can take longer on this exercise if you wish.

Look at the four compositional studies you have completed. Which composition do you prefer? Having chosen your sketch now do a collage of the composition you have chosen. Separate the papers into different tonal qualities and colours make sure you have plenty of interesting papers to work with. Old pieces of hand written letters or text can be interesting and act as a particular tone. You could frottage some textures (rubblings) in your house or outside which you could use as interesting textures. Use magazines newspapers or pages from an old book and packaging that would normally go in the bin. You can even make your own textures, patterns and colours using painted surfaces that you can cut or tear up. Make sure you are organised before you start. Have your papers sorted, your glue to hand, scissors if you decide to use them and ink to draw over the collage at the end.



Examples of frottage rubbings. The end image is by max Ernst and the coloured image is by Eva Isaksen collage using print and collaged texture.

Now tear out or cut out your major shapes. Think back to the negative space exercise. Look at the shape of the background. Be aware of the tones (we will do more on tones next week). Where are the blank large shapes and where are the details? What tones are they, what textures could you utilise?

Just enjoy the process of sticking down the papers as shapes on your chosen format. Put the detail clusters of tones and colours where they occur contrasting alongside the larger empty spaces. When you have finished, take a photo and then work over the top with Ink in carefully observed blind, semi blind line drawings or continuous line. Try not to get too bogged down with details on this assignment. Experiment and have some fun. Enjoy the textures and shapes you make. Remember if you use a lot of glue the paper will wrinkle but it can always be ironed flat at a late date. If you can work on card it will be a more substantial surface.



examples of some strong collage shapes

Hand in work.

The usual time, by Sunday the 22nd of November at midnight. Save your PowerPoint as a PDF.

Materials for next week.

You will be working in tone next week. You will need a range of pencils, charcoal if you have it and an eraser. Having an eraser is important, a putty rubber is a good idea. You could also use white bread as an eraser. You will also need black ink and various sized brushes, take in a container and ask for some black ink and borrow some brushes. Ask for any equipment you might need from the college storeroom at the end of this week. I think lockdown for you all finishes on the 20th Nov.

Below are some images created by reportage illustrators/artists that work with collage and spatial awareness.



Above train journeys, left to right Kurt Jackson and Steve Wilkin



Left to right Kurt Jackson in Glastonbury, Mark Heard working on a large collage, and Anne Howson who draws on top of old prints.

Further Composition info.

If you really want to look at composition in more depth, then research the 'rule of thirds' and the 'golden section/ratio'. But of course, you don't have to stick to these rules you can create tension in an image. All of these theories are very interesting to look into and try out.

Watch this short film about the golden section in nature.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=Pp6D-xhJr4A&app=desktop>

