Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain

Course Outline & Calendar

Exercises will be introduced in class and your instructor will assist you in completing them. However, you may wish to optimize your learning by working on exercises outside of class, especially if additional time becomes necessary to complete them. An important part of learning will involve students participating in constructive critiques of the results of the exercises. Feedback will include affirmation of accomplishments as well as recommendations for improvements or alternative ways to see and draw.

Please note: Copies of Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain will be available for use by students in this class. (You may wish to purchase the book from local or online booksellers, but it is not required.)

Week One: Monday, September 17
During the course introduction we will consider the question: What can we learn about drawing and apply today from examining Lascaux and Chauvet Cave drawings created 15,000 to 30,000 years ago respectively? To answer this question, we will evaluate space depicted in these drawings as the context for organizing such visual elements as form, light, color, points, lines, shapes, textures, and value. Additional consideration will be given to identifying evidence of such organizing aesthetic principles as harmony, unity, repetition, variety, rhythm and progression, symmetry, emphasis, and balance. It is noteworthy to recognize Edwards skeptically refers to aesthetic principles as “rules of art” and prefers not to devote attention to them (p. 119). In this course, we will treat aesthetic principles as visual strategies with which to augment building and evaluating compositions using Edwards’ drawing methods. An important part of the course will involve learning a verbal as well as a visual vocabulary of drawing and creative process terms in order to become more verbally and visually literate. We will search for evidence in ancient as well as in comparatively recent drawings of Edwards’ five perceptual drawing skills involving perception of edges, spaces, relationships, lights and shadows, and the whole or gestalt of a composition as well as evidence of applications of aesthetic principles and elements. We will begin to learn and apply her five-part skill set to achieve the goal of removing obstacles often interfering with the awakening of modes of right brain artistic seeing by exploring alternative uses of drawing tools and materials.

Edwards: Chapters 1 and 2. Anticipate applying the content of Chapters 3 and 4 in the next session.

Week Two: Monday, September 24.
During this session, we will organize the drawing process using a mirror to create self-portraits. Additionally, learning to see and draw up-side-down images will help the student comprehend nonverbal visual language and the importance of handing off constraining aspects of left brain control of the creative process to the right brain.

Edwards: Chapters 3 and 4.
Exercise 1: Pre-Instruction Self-Portrait. Time needed: 30 or more minutes
Exercise 2: Pre-Instruction Drawing of Your Hand. Time needed: 15 or more minutes
Exercise 3: Pre-Instruction Drawing of the Corner of a Room. Time needed: About 20 minutes
Exercise 4: Warm-up and Free Drawing. Time needed: About 10 minutes
**Week Three: Monday, October 1**

By releasing dependence on learned childhood and adult habits of left brain reliance on words and symbols when drawing, the student will learn to set them aside when necessary in order to choose to enter the right brain’s subjective state of nonverbal, artistic seeing. Creating a gridded view finder will aid this discovery process by enabling the artist to take advantage of the picture plane as a frame of reference for organizing compositions. Fabricating a prescribed template to make the picture plane viewer by following a sequence of logical steps Edwards assigns requires left brain skills; and use the viewer intuitively will release right brain capacities to see and draw in new and unpredictable ways.

Edwards: Chapters 5 and 6
Exercise 5: The “Vase/Faces” Drawing.  Time needed: About 5 minutes
Exercise 6: The Upside-Down Drawing.  Time needed: About 40 minutes
Exercise 7: Pure Contour Drawing. Time needed: About 15 minutes.
Exercise 8: Exercise 8: Drawing Your Hand on the Plastic Picture Plane. About 5 minutes

**Week Four: Monday, October 8**
Perceiving space in terms of positive and negative spatial patterns will help the artist learn to organize compositions holistically. By attending to implications of drawing both positive and negative spaces simultaneously, we will test Edwards’ claim that this approach may effectively supersede relying on principles of design to organize compositions (p. 119).

Edwards: Chapter 7.
Exercise 9: Setting a Ground.  Time needed: 5 to 10 minutes
Exercise 10: Transferring Your Hand Drawing from the Picture Plane to Paper.  Time needed: 30 to 40 minutes
Exercise 11: Drawing Your Hand Holding an Object.  Time: 30 to 40 minutes

**Week Five: Monday, October 15**
The artist will apply perspective drawing as a means to create spatial illusions, depth, and establish proportions. Comparing and contrasting formal left brain perspective drawing methods to right brain informal perspective drawing tactics will illustrate the value employing both right and left brain functions in the creative process.

Edwards: Chapter 8
Exercise 12 Drawing a Flower.  Time needed: 15 to 20 minutes
Exercise 16 Drawing a Household Object. Time needed: About 20 minutes
Exercise 19 Copying a Master Drawing. Time needed: 45 minutes to an hour