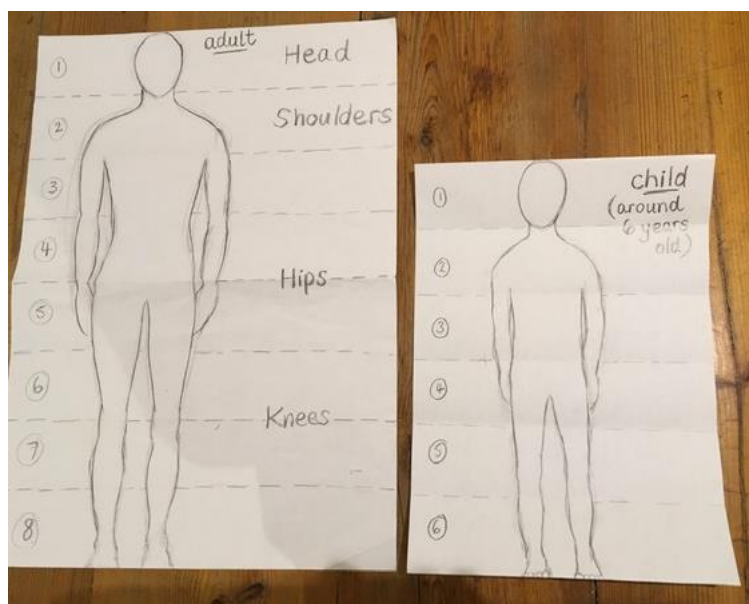


Newark Community Art Club with Elaine Winter

Session no. 30 (Summer Term): Drawing People in Proportion

Introduction.

Looking at and drawing people makes us ask ourselves: how do we feel about drawing people? Why might it be a good idea? It can be a good way of connecting us to our bodies and making us feel positive about them. Drawing people can be tricky though. When we draw people there are some approximate rules we can follow to check we are getting our proportions right, which is what this exercise will introduce you to



What you will need:

Pencil, rubber, sharpener

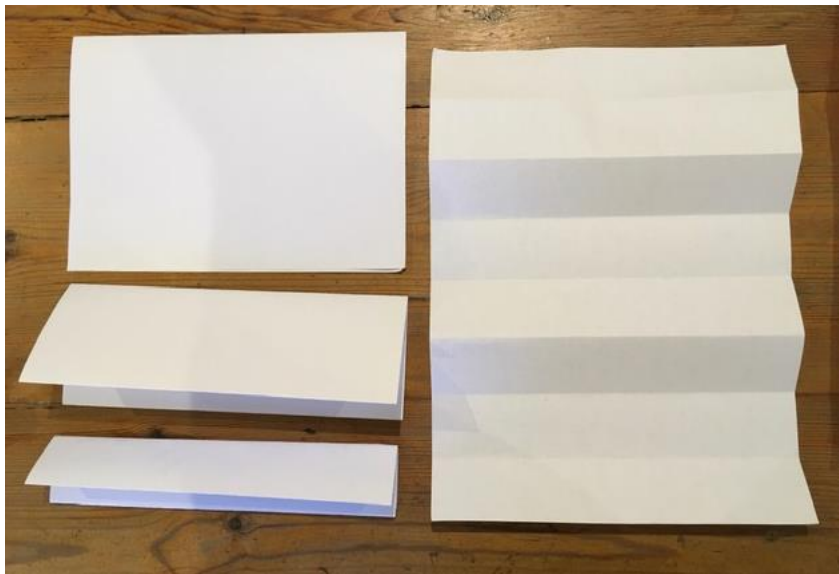
Ruler useful but not essential

White paper. You can use any size paper you like to work on and whatever you have at hand but you will need at least 2 sheets ideally.

Step 1 Take a sheet of paper and pencil and do a quick drawing of an adult person standing up. This can be yourself (if you are an adult) or someone you know. This time you are doing the drawing from memory so just draw them how you remember the person. Try to fit the whole person on the length of the paper if you can.

Step 2 Look at the drawing and look at the proportions of the body you have drawn. Does it look about right or could it be improved? You can check by doing another drawing and this time use the following formula to help you work out the proportions. You can use the length of the human head (from the very top of the head to the bottom of the chin) as a measurement unit for the entire length of the human body. All bodies are different but an average adult is approximately 8 times the length of the head in total (the head included). This is different when we are still growing as the proportions change. For instance, a toddler is about 4 times the length of the toddler's head in total, a six year old child is about 6 times the length of the child's head and so on.

Step 3 Now take a new sheet of paper and fold it in half across the width of the paper, then half again, and half again. Unfold the paper and you should have 8 sections marked by where the folds were. Use the very top section to draw the oval of the head – make sure you start at the very top of the section so the top of the head is on the very top of the first section’s edge of the paper and the bottom of the chin is on the very bottom of the first fold. Then draw the others as follows Section 2 = neck and shoulders (take care to make the shoulders wide enough), 3 = torso, the hips are on the middle fold line, the knees on the fold line half way between the hips and the bottom of the page. See the photo at the top of the first page.



Step 4 Compare your first drawing that you did from memory to the one you have done using the formula. The adult you drew may be a bit different in proportion, some people are nearer to 7 head lengths in total and some are more than 8. Nothing beats us really looking carefully at people while we are drawing them so the best way to practice is to really look at people when we draw them.

Step 5 Keep practicing and try using the proportions formula for drawing a person from the side view or the back view. Add as much detail as you can see, look at the folds in clothing, the textures of hair and skin, go for it with shading and tone.