

Newark Community Art Club with Elaine Winter
Autumn Term 2020 Session 4:

Observational drawing work out – upside down

Materials needed:

Pencil, rubber, sharpener

White paper to draw on (any size you like to work on and whatever you have at hand)

An image of a person to draw – from a book, newspaper or magazine. It doesn't have to be the whole figure, it can just be their head and shoulders for example. If it is someone you know fine, if it is just a person in the news that you have not heard of before also fine.

Introduction: When we do an observational drawing of a person or indeed anything we sometimes slip into a mode where we aren't entirely drawing from observation and instead we are partly observing and partly drawing from a collective memory bank of what people look like and relying on drawing strategies that we have used before to make a person look like a person. This drawing exercise will challenge you because your brain will be confused by the fact that the image you are doing to draw is upside down so you have to rely on honing your observational skills.

Activity 1: Look through a newspaper or magazine or book and find an image of a person to draw. It can be anything you like – a sports person, a fashion model, a celebrity, or it can even be a historical figure from a text book. The only criteria for your image is that you judge it to be clear enough to do a drawing from when you look at it the right way up.

Activity 2: Now take that picture and turn it upside down. This is going to be your subject for the drawing. Do not crane your neck to look at it the right way around!

Activity 3: Start by drawing the contour lines of your image first. Contour lines define the outline of a form, as well as interior structure without any shading, and it is usually the type of line we use to map out our drawing. When you are drawing your contour lines, spend some time to make sure it is going to fit on your paper.

Activity 4: When you are happy with your contour lines then start to add the shading in broad areas. Try not to focus on details like features but instead get some light and shade mapped out.

Activity 5: Add the details like features and patterns on clothing and so on

Activity 6: Flip your drawing the right way around and see how you have done! Don't be hard on yourself if it isn't ideal, this is all about practicing your observational skills.