

Course sample

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Open College of the Arts

0800 731 2116

enquiries@oca-uk.com



Drawing one

Drawing Skills



Student drawing

Level HE4 – 40 CATS

Open College of the Arts
Redbrook Business Park
Wilthorpe Road
Barnsley S75 1JN

Telephone: 01226 730 495

Email: enquiries@oca-uk.com

www.oca-uk.com

Registered charity number: 327446

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Times suggested here are only a guideline: you may want to spend a lot more. Research and writing time, time for reflecting and logging your learning are included.

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Assignment one

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Assignment five Option 4

Getting started

Your OCA Student Handbook is your road map through Start Drawing and all other OCA courses so keep this to hand as you work through the course.

Your tutor

Your tutor is your main point of contact with OCA. Before you start work make sure that you're clear about your tuition arrangements. The OCA tuition system is explained in some detail in your Student Handbook.

If you haven't already done so, please write a paragraph or two about your experience to date. Add background information about anything that you think may be relevant for your tutor to know about you (your profile) – for example, your own practice, your reasons for exploring this subject, what you expect to achieve from taking the course. Email or post your profile to your tutor as soon as possible. This will help them understand how best to support you during the course.

Arrange with your tutor how you'll deal with any queries that arise between assignments. This could be by email, telephone or post. You may agree, for instance, that you'll scan or photograph sketchbook images and upload them to the OCA website or a free website such as Flickr or Picassa in between tutorials, if you need your tutor to comment on something in particular, or if you have a problem that you need help with.

Send or show your tutor a cross-section of the work that you've done for each assignment in addition to the finished piece(s). This should be preliminary work for the final assignment piece as well as a sample of the work you've done for the various exercises. For example, you could scan or photograph the relevant pages of your learning log and email them to your tutor and then post the final assignment piece(s) (or bring it to your face-to-face tutorial). Or you could post your learning log as an online blog on the OCA website so that your tutor can see how your work is developing between assignments. It's particularly important that your tutor sees regular evidence of your development if you're planning to have your work on this course formally assessed.

Make sure that you label any work that you send to your tutor with your name, student number and the assignment number. Your tutor will get back to you as soon as possible after receiving your assignment but this may take a little time. Continue with the course while you're waiting.

TIP: Make pencil notes on the back of all your work as it develops. This will enable your tutor immediately to see what thoughts and issues you've had with each piece of work.

Formal assessment

If you think that you might want to have your work formally assessed – for your own satisfaction or to count towards a qualification – read the section on assessment in your Student Handbook at an early stage in the course. Your Assessment and how to get qualified study guide gives more detailed information about assessment and accreditation. For assessment you'll need to submit a cross-section of the work you've done on the course. You'll also need to submit your learning log, sketchbooks and tutor reports.

Your learning log

Keeping a learning log is an integral part of this and every other OCA course. If you're new to OCA courses, read your Keeping sketchbooks and learning logs study guide for further information.

Planning ahead

This Level 1 course represents 400 hours of learning time. You should allow around 20% of this time for reflection and learning log development. The course is divided into five parts. Within each part are several exercises, research points and reflection questions ('Check and log') to prompt you to use your learning log.

The times given are only approximate. The time you spend on each exercise will depend on how quickly you work, the time available to you, how easy or hard you find each exercise and how quickly you want to complete the course. Don't worry if you take more or less time than suggested on an exercise, provided that you're not getting too bogged down in a particular part of the course and that your tutor is happy with the work that you're producing. If it helps, draft a rough study plan and revisit this at the end of each part.

Figure drawing

For your work in Part 4 Figure drawing, you'll need to have access to a live model. Your model can be a friend or family member but the person you use will need to be prepared to spend several hours modelling for you. It's important to start thinking about this now. (You may also need a model if you pursue the figure drawing option (Option 4) in the final Assignment 5.) If a model is more readily available at an earlier point in the course (eg a son or daughter home from college or university), talk to your tutor about changing the order in which you do the assignments.

Introduction to drawing

Drawing occupies a unique place in every artist's creative life. It can be an immediate expression of seeing, thinking, analysing, investigating ideas and recording experiences. Drawing can become part of your life – not just to make art, but as a way of engaging with life. By learning to draw the world around us we can learn to see it and understand it more clearly.

We're surrounded by drawings in our daily lives: from maps, signs and graffiti to logos on packaging. It's a language that we're all familiar with and understand. Even when we can't understand a word of a particular language, we can readily relate and respond to a drawing. Some drawings cover entire walls and need to be reached with a ladder; some require large sheets of paper to be joined to give a big enough picture plane; others can be held in your hand.

Drawing is first and foremost about learning to see. Most people look but don't necessarily see. Start Drawing aims to help you to learn to do this. The course also gives you guidelines, techniques and a good basic knowledge to enable you to establish your ability to draw. With this, you'll find that you can quickly achieve satisfying results. Part of the learning process will be how to put together a collection of drawings of different sizes in your sketchbook and also much larger pieces of work drawn on individual sheets of paper. You'll experiment with different media such as pen, pencil and charcoal to achieve a variety of results.

Drawing needs practice. As you follow the exercises and experiment with different sorts of line and medium and record your observations, you'll produce increasingly confident artwork and will eventually develop your own style. As you develop your drawing skills, you'll learn to look, make comparisons and use your imagination and, as you do so, your artistic awareness will increase.

We can all learn to draw, the very first step is to believe it.

"To draw, you must close your eyes and sing."

Pablo Picasso

What you will need

You'll need a variety of drawing instruments:

- HB to 9B pencils
- Coloured pencils and water-soluble coloured pencils
- Solid graphite pencils of varying softness
- Water-soluble graphite pencils or sketching pencils
- A variety of pens and markers
- Drawing pens, dip pens and nibs and a variety of inks
- Various thicknesses of charcoal
- Oil pastels, soft pastels, conte crayons, coloured chalks, wax crayons
- Pencil sharpener
- Plastic rubber
- Putty rubber

...and various other items:

- Drawing board – the bigger the better (A2 is ideal)
- Scalpel – very useful for getting a good point on your pencil
- Pencil case – to keep everything in
- Bulldog clips to clip paper to drawing board
- Adjustable lamp so that you can direct the light source
- A1, A2, A3 and A4 white cartridge paper
- Fixative spray (see 'Using fixative and sprays' below)
- An easel (You can sit or stand at an easel. Standing gives a different view and gives you the opportunity for broader arm movements and space to stand back from your work.)
- A space to work, where you can store all this safely.

Drawing Skills

Part one

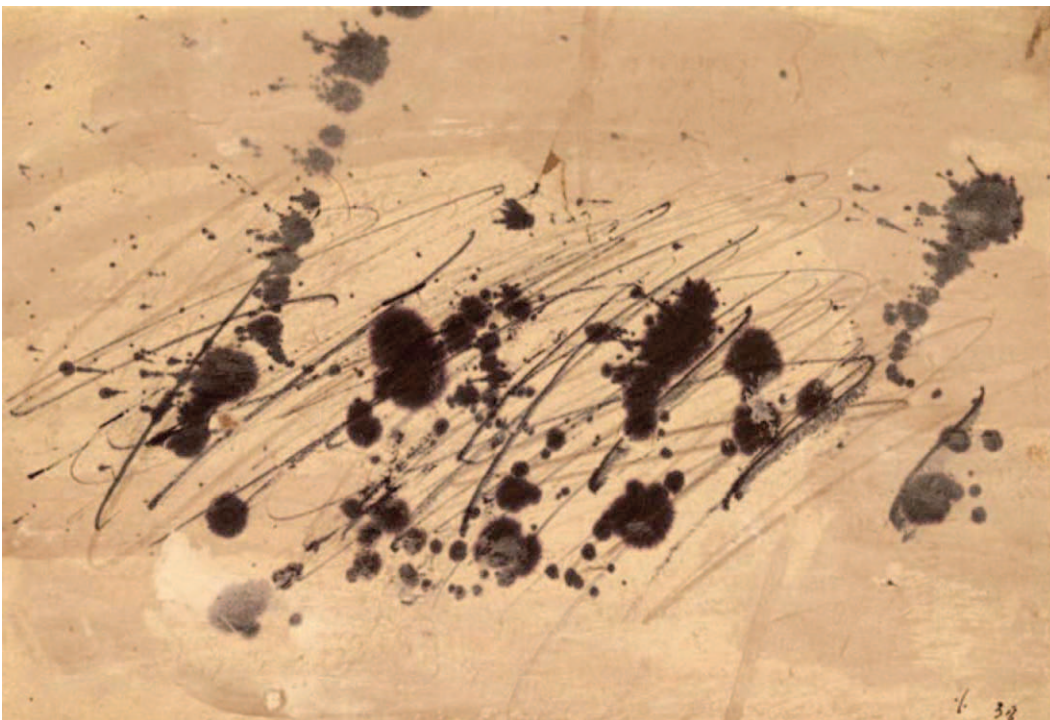
Mark-making and tone



The Olive Trees Vincent van Gogh (pen & ink on paper)

“There are universal shapes to which everyone is subconsciously conditioned and to which they can respond if their unconscious control does not switch them off.”

Henry Moore



Drawing before the Hostages Jean Fautrier, watercolour, pen and gouache on paper

Project Making marks

Drawing starts with making marks on paper. You may have something in your mind that you want to produce or you may just be daydreaming and doodling by putting down random lines. The unconscious marks you make while doodling can contribute to the development of other interesting drawings.

This project will help you experiment with making different marks and using different pens and pencils. It will also help you discover which drawing tools work best for different kinds of mark-making. First think about how you hold your pen or pencil.

Exercise Holding pens and pencils

What to do:

Practise different ways of holding your pen or pencil to see how they affect the way you approach your drawing and what difference they make to the marks you make.

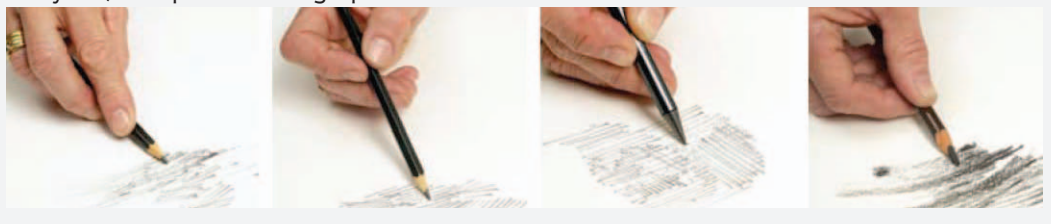
As you become able to manipulate your drawing materials more freely you will become more confident with your mark-making and drawing.

Try holding your pen or pencil right at the top and allowing it to dangle onto the paper. What kind of mark does that make? Then try holding it right towards the tip.

Work up some marks in your sketchbook. Then do some marks on the biggest piece of paper you can find. Try to sweep across the paper in big gestural strokes. How does that work? What sort of marks do you produce?

Now, try pressing lightly as you make marks with your pencil or pen. Then press deeper into the paper. You'll see how different the marks you make are as you vary the pressure.

Next, experiment with holding some different drawing tools – try charcoal, Conté crayons, soft pastels and graphite sticks.



Research point

Find a van Gogh pen and ink drawing, preferably of an outdoor, natural scene. Look at the variety of mark-making used and the expressive way in which these marks are made. If you've found a good example on the internet, print it out and stick it into your learning log. Make note on the types of marks employed.



Vase of Flowers in a Garden Eric Ravilious

Pencil and watercolour on paper

Here the artist has used a sharp implement to scratch marks into the paint to give the effect of grass in an overgrown garden. Find out more about this artist and his techniques.

Check and log

- How did holding your pen or pencil in a different way affect your drawing?
- Which drawing tools suited the different mark-making techniques you used?
- Did you find that any marks or tools you used matched particular emotions or feelings? Did one convey calm and another frenzy for example?
- How did the introduction of colour (soft pastels, Conté crayons) affect your mark-making?
- Which of these experiments have you found most interesting and rewarding?

Project Basic shapes and fundamental form

Your flat piece of paper with its two-dimensional surface is known as the picture plane. When you put a line on this plane you are making a mark without any sense of solidity or three dimensional space. But with a few more lines you can create an apparently three-dimensional object. Drawn lines on paper are an artistic convention used to delineate the boundary of an object in relation to other objects. Such lines do not exist in reality.

An important stage in the process of learning how to draw is the ability to recognise that the basic shapes: square, rectangle, circle, ellipse and triangle, are flat, two-dimensional and bound by a perimeter. When structured they make up the three-dimensional fundamental forms of cube, sphere, cylinder and cone. It is important not to confuse the idea of form with shape. Almost any object, no matter how complex it may seem, consists basically of box-like or cylindrical forms.



Ian Simpson