

Embracing Accidents: The Art of Gesture Drawing



Goal: Students will create quick gesture drawings from a still life and a model.

Teacher: Kathryn Moran

Grade Level: 10-12

Title: Embracing Accidents: The Art of Gesture Drawing

Standards:

- 9.1A Elements and Principles in each art form
- 9.1C Vocabulary within each art form
- 9.2A A Context of Works in the Arts
- 9.2C Styles and Genres in art
- 9.2L Common Themes in works of art
- 9.3B Criteria
- 9.4B Aesthetic Interpretation
- 9.4D Artistic Choices
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Goal: Students will create quick gesture drawings from a still life and one final drawing, using ink, paintbrush and pastels.

Objectives:

1. Students will become familiar with the work of Marlene Dumas.
2. Students will understand the concept of “gesture drawing”.
3. Students will understand the concept of “happy accidents”.
4. Students will create five large scale, quick gesture drawing studies, and one final drawing.
5. Students will extend their arm and choke back on their paintbrush to create loose gesture drawings
6. Students will research and present at least one work of a contemporary artist who uses gesture lines in their work

Requirements:

- Five large scale gesture drawing studies and one final drawing, made with ink, paintbrush and pastels.
- A short, opinion paragraph critiquing the work of a contemporary artist who uses gesture lines in his/her work, students should also have a example of that artist’s work.

Resources/Visual Aids:

- Artforum magazine
- Marlene Dumas: One Hundred Models and Rejects
- Marlene Dumas: Exhibition Catalogue, Moore College of Art and Design
- Alice Neel: Paintings and Drawings
- Willem De Kooning: Drawings
- Art and Adolescence: Teaching Art at the Secondary Level

Supplies/Materials:

- Ink
- Newsprint and/or sketch paper
- 24 by 32 heavy weight drawing paper
- Paintbrushes
- Containers for water
- Paper towels
- Organic objects for still life (plants, a skeleton, gourds, fabric, etc.)

Teacher Preparation

1. Obtain examples of Marlene Dumas' work and her biography/ artist statement
2. Obtain materials and visual aids
 - *Images by Marlene Dumas, Alice Neel, Willem De Kooning, Edouard Monk, Henri Matisse, Kathe Kollowitz
 - *Set up a still life that includes mainly organic objects; plants, a skeleton, gourds, fabric, etc)

Teaching:

Introduction:

- Introduce Marlene Dumas and her work.
 - *Ask students to describe Dumas' images: materials, subject matter, and process, "What do you see?"
 - *Present the students with several questions:
 - "Are Dumas' works drawings or paintings?"
 - "What do you think about the level of control Dumas has over her materials?"
 - "Do you think her lack of control is a conscious decision?"
 - "Do these images appear to have been time consuming?"
 - "What do you think Dumas is trying to capture in these drawings?"
 - "Does this work remind you of any other artists?"
 - "What elements of art are most important to Dumas?"
 - *Hopefully, this segment of the introduction will be a group discussion led, but not dominated, by the instructor.
 - *Discuss other artists who use quick gestural lines in their work. Hang the visual aids side by side and present the students with several questions:
 - What do all these images have in common?
 - Are you familiar with any of these artists?
 - What do these artists have in common with Marlene Dumas?
 - Is there a sense of movement in any of these images?
 - Is there a sense of form?
 - Do you think these artists worked with their fingers clenched around their drawing tools, crouched over their paper, or did they stand back from their work and use their whole arm to create these lines?

*The last question will lead the instructor right into the lesson. Discuss the importance of loosening the grip on the paintbrush and using the entire arm to make the gesture lines, also emphasize the importance of “fast lines” vs. “slow lines” in creating gesture drawings. “Fast lines” are large gesture lines, for instance; the outside line of a plant leaf, and “slow lines” are smaller detail lines, for instance; the small vein-like lines inside a leaf.

Directions:

1. Students will gather materials from a central table; three different size paintbrushes, a container of ink, paper towels for blotting, several pieces of newsprint and/or sketch paper, 7-10 pieces of heavyweight paper, and a container for water.
2. Students will do their first studies on the newsprint, or sketch paper to get a feel for the materials. When they feel confident with the ink, they may begin to work on the heavyweight paper.
3. Students will create between 7 and 10 large-scale quick gesture drawings of the still life, (they can choose their best 5 to present at the critique).
4. Students will use their paintbrush as an extension of their arm.
5. When the student has completed their gesture drawings, with the approval of the instructor, they may move onto the final drawing.
6. The students may use pastels on their final drawing, once the ink has dried. The students may have “accidents” in their final drawings, if they feel it is enhancing their work.
7. When the final drawing is complete, the students will begin the research portion of the lesson.
8. Students must find a contemporary artist who uses gesture lines, or in his/her work.
9. Students must obtain at least one image by the artist they choose and write a short paragraph about the artist.

Closure:

- There will be a critique/discussion about the final drawings and presentations of the artists and images the students chose to research.

Critique/Evaluation/Assessment:

- During the critique the instructor should raise several questions:
 - How did it feel to use your whole arm to create a line?
 - Were you able to find “fast lines” in the still life?
 - Did you enjoy the level of control you had over your materials?
 - What criteria did you use to determine the best five drawings?
- After the criteria are discussed (the instructor will make a list on the board), the instructor will use the student’s suggestions to discuss the work further.

Extensions:

- Early finishers may use the extra time to do a self-portrait gesture drawing.

Time Budget:

- This lesson will take between three and four 80 minute block periods to complete.

Safety Concerns:

- There are no safety concerns.

Bibliography:

Medvedow, Jill. Marlene Dumas: One Hundred Models and Endless Rejects. Hatje Cantz Publishers, Boston: 2001.

Powers, Sarah. Alice Neel: Paintings and Drawings. Locks Gallery, Philadelphia: 2005.

Requirements: Final Ink Gesture Drawing AP Studio Art

1. Drawing touches all four sides of the page.
2. Drawing shows evidence of large, fast arm movements.
3. Washes create foreground and background, surface quality, and form.
4. Color pastels create highlights and areas of focus.
5. Composition is balanced.
6. Line work is varied.

Rubric: Final Ink Gesture Drawing
AP Studio Art

Name:

Drawing touches all four sides of the page. (5 points)	
Drawing shows evidence of large, fast arm movements. (20 points)	
Washes create foreground and background, surface quality, and form. (20 points)	
Color pastels create highlights and areas of focus. (15 points)	
Composition is balanced. (15 points)	
Line work is varied. (20 points)	
Craftsmanship. (5 points)	

Self Evaluation
AP Studio Art
Five Ink Gesture Drawings

Do I have five drawings total, including two cropped compositions?

Describe three of the drawings: include the strengths of the drawings and anything you would do to make improvements.

Did I use the entire page in each drawing?

Is it obvious that I was using my entire arm to create loose, large, gesture lines? Describe specific drawings where there is evidence of quick, loose, lines.

Did I use washes to create background and foreground, or form?

Self Evaluation: Final Ink Drawing

Name:

Number:

Is there evidence of large, fast arm movements? Please be specific

Is the composition balanced?

Is there variety in the line work (value changes and thick to thin)? Describe where you used really thick lines and where you used thin lines and your reasoning.

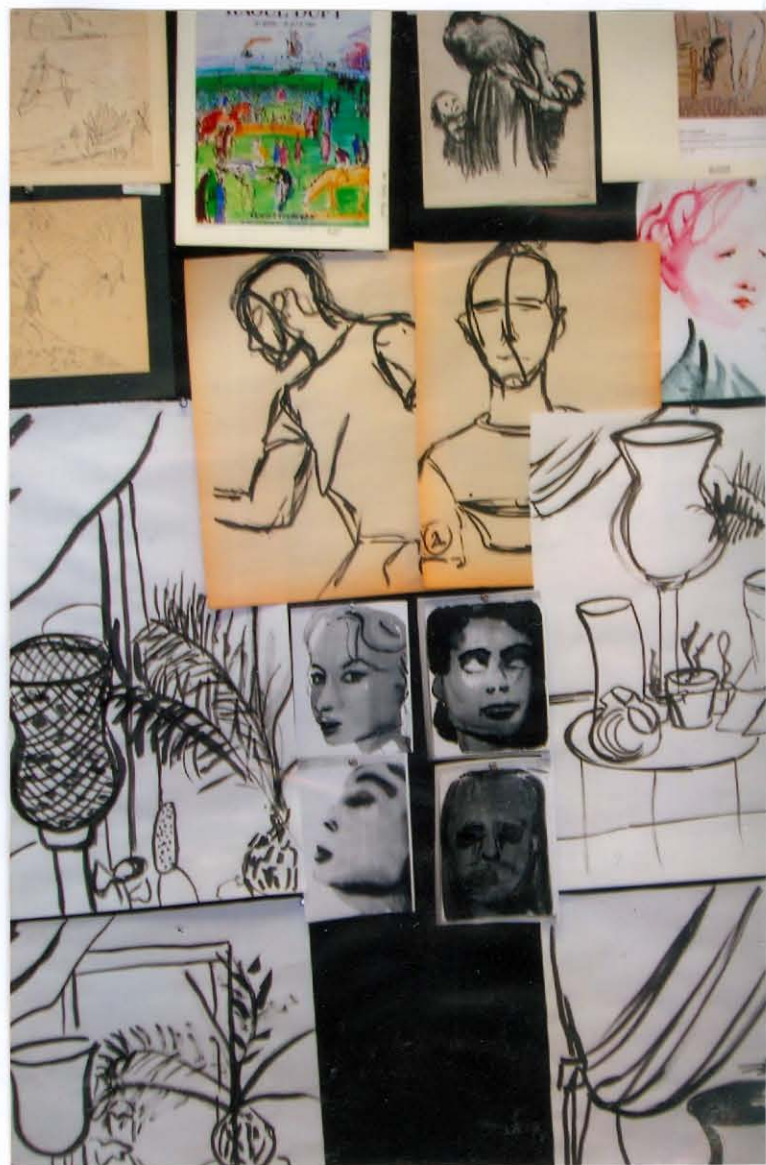
How did you use washes in your final piece? Please be specific.

Does the drawing touch all four corners of the page?

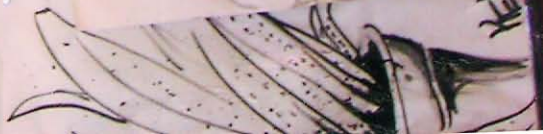
How is color used in the drawing?



Classroom Setup



Examples







Student Work



Students Work





