

Valley Art Academy

Fine art instruction for students of all ages,
from the convenience of home.

www.valleyartacademy.com

INSTRUCTOR: Miles Lewis - mileslewisstudio.com

Each month will combine technical, historical, and compositional instruction. Students will develop a rich understanding of how to create pictures from observation and imagination. Each weekly class will feature an interactive presentation and a guided exercise.

In order to encourage and enrich the growth of individual students and styles, we return to fundamental lessons repeatedly from many different perspectives. From quarter to quarter, students will simultaneously build their technical toolkit and their world of creative possibilities.

SPRING QUARTER

MARCH 2021

TEXTURE AND LANDSCAPE

APRIL 2021

FIGURE AND FACE

MAY 2021

STILL LIFE AND STORY

SUMMER QUARTER

JUNE 2021

PERPECTIVE

JULY 2021

LIGHT

AUGIST 2021

STORIES OF LIGHT AND SPACE

SPRING QUARTER - March/April/May

MARCH 2021

Texture and Landscape

In this month, students will learn about the strategies for representing natural effects and textures. By the end of the month, students will produce a landscape illustration in addition to a collection of technical sketches. The presentations will cover the history of these techniques.

Week 1 - Natural Textures

In this first class, we'll cover the fundamentals of representing physical textures and effects. These are the building blocks of observational drawing and painting.

In our presentation, we'll cover historical examples of simulated (e.g., the illusion of texture) and actual texture (e.g., thick brushstrokes).

In the class exercise, students will do texture drawings from materials in their environment. They will receive guidance throughout the process.

Week 2 - Atmospheric Textures

In this second class, we'll cover atmospheric texture. This includes representing the time of day, distance, clouds, mountains, and how to tell stories using mood.

In our presentation, we'll cover a range of different landscape types and feelings, from basic to epic.

In the class exercise, students will learn how to manipulate these elements by placing an epic subject in a basic environment and vice-versa.

Week 3 - Romanticism

In this third class, we'll cover the history of the Romantic period in art, connecting it to takeaways from the first two classes.

In our presentation, we'll cover how the Romantic period of painting developed in response to new ways of looking at and representing the natural world.

In the class exercise, students will design an illustration that emphasizes some aspect of human beings' connection to the natural world.

Week 4 - Landscape Composition

In this fourth class, using the lessons of the previous three classes, we'll cover the history of landscape painting.

The presentation will emphasize how different cultures and periods represent humanity's connection to nature.

In the class exercise, students will expand on their illustration from week three, focusing on the texture of objects and atmosphere, a storyline, and a strong composition.

APRIL 2021

Figure and Face

In this month, students will learn the foundational skills for drawing the human head and figure. By the end of the month, students will produce a collection of technical sketches that they can use as reference for building their figure-drawing skills.

Week 1 - Basic Body Anatomy

In this first class, we'll cover the fundamentals for turning stick-figures into real human forms.

In our presentation, we'll cover the essentials that artists need to create realistic figures. We'll refer to historical paintings, comic books, and illustration.

In the class exercise, students will create basic body structures that they will position in 3-4 action poses.

Week 2 - Basic Face Anatomy

In this second class, we'll cover the fundamentals for turning face sketches into expressive human heads.

In our presentation, we'll cover the essentials that artists need to create realistic heads. We'll refer to historical paintings, comic books, and illustration.

In the class exercise, students will follow and copy Miles as he demonstrates a 30-40 minute head drawing.

Week 3 - Interactions Between Characters

In this third class, we'll discuss how figures respond to each other in story illustrations.

In our presentation, we'll go through the history of interaction illustration, from mythic and religious pictures, to comic books, animation, and movies.

In the class exercise, students will sketch out three interactions between two characters, provided by Miles.

Week 4 - Interactions Between Heads

In this fourth class, we'll go deeper into facial expression and how human faces react to one another.

In our presentation, we'll continue on the subject of interaction illustration, from the third week.

MAY 2021

Still Life and Story

In this last month of the quarter, students will combine the lessons of the previous two months to tell complex stories using texture, atmosphere, and figure drawing. By the end of the month, students will produce a narrative illustration that combines the lessons of the full three months.

Students will cultivate strong critical and creative thinking skills as they join in critique of each others' work.

Week 1 - Picture Development

In this first class, we'll discuss different strategies for starting and building a picture. Beginning artists often have trouble getting started. This class will focus on giving students tools for self-starting.

In our presentation, we'll go through a number of examples of concept development processes, including painting, animation, and video games.

In the class exercise, Miles will guide students through two pathways for constructing pictures.

Week 2 - Still Life as Story

In this second class, we'll apply last week's concept development tools to a still life drawing. Students will use their observational drawing skills and their imaginations, simultaneously.

In our presentation, we'll look at a series of still lives that tell stories. Students will provide their own story ideas for what the pictures represent.

In our exercise, students will begin developing a still life from imagination, with a focus on both material appearances and the story told between the objects.

Week 3 - Non-Human Characters

In this third class, as a group, we'll go over the drawings from the last class. Miles will give each student guidance on where to go next. Students will also give each other input.

In our presentation, we'll cover the history of non-human character creation. We'll look at the advantages and disadvantages of telling relatable tales using animals, objects, plants, etc.

Our exercise for this class will be continuing work from the previous week.

Week 4 - Non-Human Characters II

In this fourth class, as a group, we'll go over the drawings from the last class.

Miles will give each student guidance on where to go next. Students will also give each other input.

In our presentation, we'll continue the history of non-human character creation, with a focus on inanimate objects.

Our exercise for this week will simply be to finish the illustration from the past two classes.

SUMMER QUARTER - June/July/August

June

PERSPECTIVE

In this month, students will learn about the strategies for creating full 3-D spaces on 2-D surfaces. By the end of this month, students will have a collection of sketches that demonstrate a fundamental grasp of linear and multi-point perspective.

Week 1 - One-Point Perspective

In this first class, we'll discuss the fundamentals of 1-point perspective, its history and use.

In our presentation, we'll go through the recent history of pictorial perspective, with particular emphasis on its use in animation and comics.

In the class exercise, Miles will guide students through the creation of a simple 3-D scene using 1-point perspective.

Week 2 - Multi-Point Perspective

In this second class, we'll discuss the fundamentals of 2-point, 3-point and multi-point perspective, its history and use.

In our presentation, we'll go through examples of multi-point perspective images and discuss how and why artists made this choice.

In the class exercise, Miles will guide students through the representation of a few 3-D objects in one multi-point perspective layout.

Week 3 - Figures in Perspective/Foreshortening

In this third class, students will learn how to represent figures in different kinds of perspective. They will also learn the reasons for altering perspective for story-telling purposes.

In our presentation, we'll look at historical examples of figures represented in unusual or dramatic perspectives. We'll also discuss them in contrast to traditional, monumental figure painting.

Our exercise will include the representation of one figure in dramatic perspective.

Week 4 - Floating Worlds

In this fourth class, students will learn about the illustration of floating environments (e.g., underwater, flying, space travel, etc.). These complex spaces require good grounding in perspective.

In our presentation, we'll look at the history of floating world illustrations, for scientific and entertainment purposes.

Our exercise for this week will be similar to the 2nd Week's multi-point perspective prompt, with students creating their own floating environment. This week, the theme will be clearer, depending on the environment and its material details.

July

LIGHT

In this month, students will build on their perspective education, learning how to fill spaces with light, using observation and logic. By the end of this month, students will have a collection of sketches that demonstrate a fundamental grasp of light logic.

Week 1 - Light Logic

In this first class, we'll talk about how to create a light source and illustrate its pattern of effects within a picture.

In our presentation, we'll go through a history of how light sources are used in visual media, especially painting and movies.

In the class exercise, students will create an interior space with a light source. Miles will guide each student in making sure that their light patterns are consistent.

Week 2 - The Names of Lights and Shadows

In this second class, students will learn useful terms for identifying and categorizing light and shadow effects.

In our presentation, we'll go through historical examples of how different kinds of light and shadow are used to create different kinds of pictures.

In the class exercise, Miles will guide students through the study of a high contrast photograph, as they draw a diagram breaking it down into light and shadow categories.

Week 3 - Light and Mood

In this third class, students will learn about how important light is for creating mood in all kinds of images.

In our presentation, we'll go through many examples of atmospheric lighting, with attention to both value and color.

In the class exercise, students will illustrate three different atmospheric moods for the same scene.

Week 4 - Light Shapes and Shadow Silhouettes

In this fourth class, students will learn about the graphic power of light and shadow patterns.

In our presentation, we'll look at examples of how carefully proportioned light and shadow shapes can create strong 2-D and 3-D effects.

In the class exercise, Miles will lead students through the selection of a simple light pattern in a dark background and vice-versa.

August

STORIES OF LIGHT AND SPACE

In this month, students will combine their knowledge of perspective, light, figuration, and texture to create a final illustration. While we proceed through this illustration, students will also learn about the history and variety of storytelling in light and space.

Week 1 - Interior and Exterior Lighting

In this first class, students will begin an illustration that tells much of its story through strategic lighting.

In our presentation, we'll go through a history of how interior and exterior lighting, individually and in combination, are used to tell stories. We'll pay special attention to painting and movies.

In the class exercise, students will begin their illustrations with a clear indication of perspective, light pattern, and story.

Week 2 - Mythic and Religious Lighting

In this second class, students will continue with their illustrations from the first week.

In our presentation, we'll go through historical examples of mythic and religious lighting. This includes dramatic and unnatural (but logical) light patterns and sources. In the class exercise, students will continue with their illustrations from the first week. Miles will guide the students in a critique about how effectively their use of light tells a story. Students will additionally incorporate emphasis and exaggeration to strengthen their images.

Week 3 - The Light of Floating Worlds

In this third class, students will continue with their illustrations from the second week. They'll also learn about the difference in overall lighting caused by floating environments (underwater, in space, etc.).

In our presentation, we'll go through examples of floating world images, with strong attention paid to how light changes depending on the medium (water, air, vacuum, etc.).

In the class exercise, students will continue with their illustrations from the second week. Miles will guide the students in a critique about how to create a stronger sense of 3-dimensionality by looking at how light is passing through the atmosphere of the drawing.

Week 4 - Final Illustration

In this fourth class, students will finish their illustrations for the month.

The presentation for this week will be a review of the students' work so far. Students will be able to provide critique and guidance to each other, with attention to technical effects and story-telling.

The class exercise will simply be the completion and sharing of the illustrations.