

NEW YORK STUDIO SCHOOL OF DRAWING, PAINTING & SCULPTURE

Spring 2022

VIRTUAL DRAWING MARATHON

The Shock of Icarus – Avian Space & Elephantine Weight
with Graham Nickson & Guests

Instructor: Graham Nickson & Guests
Class Hours: 9am – 6pm, ET or later
Tuesday, January 18 – Friday, January 28, 2022
(class does not meet on Sunday, January 23)
Contact: slevy@nyss.org

Course Description

Ovid's Metamorphosis would have us believing that Icarus fell to Earth by flying too close to the sun. However, trying to fly is a metaphor for his ambition, his way to escape his own restrictions. He looked at birds, which are free and inquisitive. Like in a drawing, birds explore space by making it tangible in the aerial pathways in the sky; literally making the negative space active and full of surprises, flying in and out of the cavities. Good negative spaces have a crucial role in drawing, they can hold it all together.

Countering this, we display the weight of forms in a drawing, which brings to mind that monumental and gentle animal: the elephant. Extraordinary, huge and endangered, the elephant has demonstrative weight as a presence. Our task is to describe the bond between these two elements, to witness the intense relationship between form and space and pull them together. The freer the space, the more weight the forms carry. Using the rectangle inventively gives us the arena of the search for that which exists in between the spaces and their opposites, translating into exciting drawings and a revelatory experience.

The birds and elephant are metaphoric, but they describe our need. We shall look at early works by cave painters, Etruscan artists, and later painters like Mantegna and Rembrandt, Matisse and Picasso, and make transcriptions of these.

Course Outline

In this Marathon, participants internalize the importance of drawing as a basis for understanding one's experience of the world. Drawing is seen here as the most direct route to the examination of our perceptions. Unorthodox tools and exercises will be introduced to broaden the student's drawing vocabulary and methods of working. The class meets every day for two consecutive weeks from 9am to 6pm, five days a week. Evening critiques will be held during both weeks. Times of the critiques will be announced during the session. We will approach the meaning of images, investigating what contributes to a "powerful image". We will discuss 'pictorial' subject versus 'narrative' subject as we employ diverse structures: strategies such as the grid, the organic spiral and geometry, all of which play essential parts in the language of drawing.

This course will investigate many implications of drawing as a physical and cerebral activity as well as drawing as a philosophy. We will discuss key issues, including those of scale—tiny to huge; the use of different formats; the use of the rectangle; the vertical axis and its significance; the nature of distortions; the compression of space

and depth; the search for 'form' and its consequences; space and its meaning, functions and the different kinds of space; and the nature of relational drawing.

We will approach the meaning of images, investigating what contributes to a "powerful image". We will discuss "pictorial" subject versus narrative subject: the diversities of structure, especially using strategies like the grid, the organic spiral and geometry, all of which play a part in research into the language of drawing.

Each day produces an intense working mode, utilizing the vitality of each individual's purpose. Students work very hard and are offered individual criticism on a one to one basis. The average day usually contains several group critiques and a lengthy final critique at the end of the physical drawing session, and is intensified for the last critique at the end of the course. The dialogue and discussions within the group are expected to be clear and succinct. The students are encouraged to participate and understand the visual language of drawing.

Materials and supplies

- Black acrylic paint, 32 oz.
 - White acrylic paint, 32 oz.
 - Acrylic gloss medium, 32 oz.
 - Acrylic paint, 8 oz. each
 - Yellow ochre
 - Cadmium Yellow Medium
 - Quinacridone Rose or Magenta
 - Indian red
 - Cobalt or Cerulean blue (no pthalo)
 - Hard pastels/Conte, 2-3 of each
 - Indian red
 - Burnt umber
 - Yellow ochre
 - Colored pencils, 2 of each
 - Indian red
 - Prussian blue
 - Set of Watercolors (Optional)
 - Set of Colored Pencils (Optional)
 - Pencils, a selection of 6B through 2h (a standard set of drawing pencils works well)
 - Vine charcoal, willow:
 - Thin –3 boxes
 - Medium – 6 boxes
 - Extra-large – 2 or 3 boxes
 - Paper (recommended brands are Fabriano, Montval, Saunders, Stonehenge, Canson, Dick Blick Student Watercolor Paper):
 - 100 sheets of 22" x 30",
- 90lb, cold press**
Paper Rolls are an Option for working large if you have space. We recommend a combination of 40 sheets of 22" x 30" paper and One paper roll approx.10 yards x 60" roll of paper, **140 lb, cold press**
- Brushes:
 - Large housepainters or chip brushes- 1" or 2"
 - Bristle rounds- a selection of small to large, at least 3
 - Sabeline or other fine synthetic- small and medium for fine edges, at least 2
 - Staedtler erasers, at least 3
 - Chamois cloth (old soft t-shirt or rag works as well)
 - Pushpins, one box
 - Staple gun & at least one box of staples (we recommend the T-50 for the best heavy-duty stapler)
 - Staple remover
 - Scissors
 - Masking tape & white (artist's) tape
 - *Ball of string*
 - Measuring tape and yard stick or T-square
 - Paper towels
 - Large surface for palette (recommended 20" x 20", can be plastic **or** thin wood sealed)
 - black ink
- Useful Items:
- Palette knife – med/large blade for mixing
 - Spoon for getting paint out of jars
 - Latex gloves
 - Water spray bottle

- Containers for acrylic paint (Large yogurt containers or something similar)

*****Please Keep All Receipts***** *Due to the improvisational nature of the marathon, some materials may not be utilized in full. If you would like the option of potentially returning un-used materials, please do not open them.*

***NO CHARKOLE OR COMPRESSED CHARCOAL**

***NO PADS OR NEWSPRINT**

Evaluation and Grading

NYSS MFA Students will be evaluated on the basis of their studio practice, their participation in and contributions to the class, as well as the assignments listed above. Grading is on a High Pass/Pass/Low Performance/Fail basis. Visiting participants will not receive grades or evaluations for this course.

School, Department & Class Policies

Please refer to the Student Handbook for information regarding the School's policies on academic integrity and plagiarism. All students must abide by the general health and safety regulations laid out in the Student Handbook, as well as any specific instructions given by the Instructor(s). We expect excellent studio practice from all students. This encompasses respect for models, fellow students and faculty.

NYSS Student Conduct for Virtual Learning

In order to maintain a virtual space wherein participants feel at ease to share and learn openly with one another, the New York Studio School prohibits participants in virtual classes from recording, taking screenshots, or otherwise copying any portion of New York Studio School's online courses. While participants are free to share images of their own coursework, sharing or posting images or recordings from a virtual class on social media is prohibited without the consent of the instructor, models, and students from class. Course content is solely for registered students of the class and cannot be shared with others. By participating in virtual courses, students are aware that the New York Studio School may record and archive Zoom meetings, Padlet pages, and other content from the course.