Fall 2023
VIRTUAL DRAWING MARATHON
The Journey of Line to its Own Dissolution
with Graham Nickson & Guests

Instructor: Graham Nickson & Guests
Class Hours: 9am – 6pm ET, with occasional evening critiques
Tuesday, September 5 - Friday, September 15
(class does not meet on Sunday, September 10)
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

Drawing is the driving force of being an artist and line is part of the story.

Line is the first mark of human experience. The mark on the cave wall turned into a line that described the head of a horse or the leg of a buffalo. In order to understand the history of line we will draw with the great artists of the past as our guides.

Vasari complained that although Titian is a great painter, his work suffered from a lack of drawing. The drawings of Rembrandt reveal a reliance on line and yet his ink washes contribute to its dissolution. Likewise, Seurat’s investigations of the dot and his beautiful tonal drawings form a linear dissolution of line.

In the twentieth century, we have heard Egon Schiele exclaim “line is everything.” In later years Paul Klee would “take a line for a walk.” Lucio Fontana interpreted slashes in the canvas as a surrogate for line and Walter de Maria buried his line, a copper tube, vertically a mile into the earth.

Line, an element of form and a container of expression, holds the potential to fulfill a functional and transformative role in drawing.

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; the functions of space 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 phthalo)
- 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
  - Sableine 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. The concentration of fellow students must always be respected, therefore, in the atelier, students should not talk loudly, nor should they have music players of any kind and all telephones must be turned off.

**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.