

Good Drawing is Important

Students who study Art to become an artist must begin by learning how to Draw. They learn the Art Elements and Art Principles and begin to draw what they can see. It is important to train the eye to see Line, Shape, Texture and to use a drawing of lines to show what they are seeing. Students practice and erase repeatedly until their image is correct. Once a shape is accurately drawn, the next step is to add value of light and dark. This gives the outlined shape “volume” to appear dimension and have depth. To create a picture, the placement or composition on the paper as well as the perspective of near and far needs to be drawn from how they see their world. Then after the pencil drawing is complete, the student can begin to add color.

In the CPPG, in the Villages, it is not expected for members to know how to draw because they are learning how to use the art media of “Colored Pencils”. Therefore, it is allowed for students to “trace” a drawing or original photo onto paper and then add the layering process of colored pencil to complete the painting. There are some students who have “art experience” and will draw their own drawing, then trace it onto the appropriate paper for the colored pencil work. I trace my own drawing because if I were to draw freehand onto the paper, I would need to erase and correct my drawing to be as accurate as I expect. This erasing would remove the paper surface, and also add embossed lines from the drawing that would show through the colored pencil layers. (This is similar for Watercolor Artists)

I would encourage colored pencil students to take some beginner classes in Drawing to practice coordinating your brain, with your eyes, to your hand. I would also suggest trying to draw an “outline” of a simple shape - SHOE - placing it on table in front of you. Start on one side, at the top of the shoe, and draw the outer edge line. Look more at the shape, and only draw a line 1 inch long - STOP- look back at the edge of the shoe to “check your line to make sure it is correct.” Then continue.

This is called “Contour Drawing.” It is the easiest to help develop the Brain to “listen” to what the “Eyes” are actually seeing. They are sending this information to the Brain. THEN the Brain makes the Hand move to make the outline. When you look at the line, and “see a mistake” — it is not the Hand that made the mistake. It is the BRAIN !

The eye sees everything all at once and sends so much visual info to the brain that the brain “Decides” which is important to retain. Example: have you ever been somewhere in the car and looking outside said “oh, I never saw that before” ...perhaps the Brain did not focus on it for you to notice? This is why the short line you draw, little by little, is important to “Train” your brain to really focus on what the eye is seeing.

I would have the Grade 5 students do a Contour Study of their Shoe. Choose a sneaker or boot. Sandals and High Heels are too hard! Start at the top of the shoe and begin to draw the outer edge, slowly with short lines - Stop by keeping your pencil on the paper....look up at the shoe outline edge, then check your drawing for accuracy of what you see and the line you drew. Then continue. The Goal is not to be perfect but to train your eye to see LINES and SHAPES. When you copy an image for colored pencil, you will be better able to see the Lines + Shapes and begin to check what you are “seeing” with your eyes from the photo reference to your actual image. This is how an artist works, by really looking at lines and shapes around them to train how to “see.”