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Techniques  
Drawing glass involves a lot of observational skill, patience, and understanding of light. Nonetheless, there are helpful tips that artists can employ to master this challenge. Let's delve into some of the first tips to change your perspective. Instead of seeing glass as an object you need to outline, view it as an entity defined by the reflected and refracted light it interacts with. Pay close attention to the way light changes when passing through glass and how it impacts the colors and shapes behind it. Secondly, it's essential to start with the right mindset at hand—trying to draw every little detail can be overwhelming. Instead, focus on capturing the essential highlights, shadows and reflections that define the glass's form. Lastly, practicing drawing from reference images can be immensely beneficial. Begin with simple shapes and progressively take on more complex glass forms. Remember, even in realism, art is an interpretation. Drawing anime can be hard too. Anime requires a specific style and specific characteristics to be present in order to properly represent the style and medium. Link: See our guide on How to Draw Anime hereThe anime art form can be quite hard to master because of its unique blend of realism and stylization.One of the main hurdles is acquainting yourself with the exaggerated visual language of anime, which often deviates drastically from real-world proportions and lighting. For instance, anime faces are characterized by overly large, expressive eyes and an array of hair styles defying gravity, which can be quite challenging for rookies to master.Another potential pitfall is the unrealistic body proportions, where characters' bodies are often elongated and exaggerated. This is a shift from conventional figure drawing practices that prioritize anatomical accuracy, and might seem disconcerting initially. Here are some key tips to help you draw anime:Pay close attention to popular anime series and mangas to familiarize yourself with the common stylistic elements discernable in characters. Focus on how anime artists exaggerate certain facial features like anime eyes, and the way they employ stylized lighting and shading techniques. Following that, get back to basics by brushing up on your basic drawing skills. Even though anime involves a degree of stylization, a solid grounding in the fundamentals of drawing, such as perspective, anatomy, and shading, will significantly help you in stylizing your artwork accurately and creatively. Remember, the aim is not to create an exact replica, but to understand and incorporate the conventions of anime into your drawings.Drawing from life can be quite difficult if you haven't practiced it much. Instead of drawing from imagination or from reference images drawing from life has its own challenges. Some common drawings from life are done with a still life setup (of fruit or any other object) a live nude model or plein airDrawing from life, in the world of artistry, is referred to as observational drawing. This method of drawing focuses primarily on the detailed observation of the subject in the real world as the artist attempts to replicate it on their platform. Consider going to a park and sketching the scenery that you see - that's observational drawing. It challenges artists to depict subjects realistically, including texture, depth, lighting, and other attributes that may be ignored or abstracted in non-realistic styles.Observational drawing acts as a basis for most artistic endeavors. It trains the artist to see the world as it exists, allowing them to pick up on minute details. This emphasis on detail enables them to effectively depict both simple and complex subjects. With practice, artists can capture the intricacies of life accurately, bringing their work closer to the realm of realism.Plein Air sketch by Bruce OutridgePlein Air is a popular style of painting that involves creating artwork outdoors in the natural light while observing the landscape or subject directly. The term comes from the French phrase "en plein air," meaning "in the open air." Plein Air presents artists with the challenge of working with constantly changing natural lighting, a contrast to the controlled environment of a studio.However, plein air can be challenging due to outdoor elements such as changing weather conditions, shifting light, and unexpected disruptions. Despite these confounding factors, the payoff for artists is worth it. By directly immersing themselves in the environment, the artist can acquire a deeper understanding of the subject, enabling them to represent it with greater authenticity on their canvas.Drawing from the imagination can be challenging because it incorporates an entirely different skill set compared to observational drawing or reference material drawing.Drawing from memory requires you to conceptualize an image in your mind and bring it to life on paper.When I first got into art, I was surprised that almost every great artist uses reference images. I guess I just thought these artists were so great that they just pulled out immaculate, detailed drawings and paintings directly from their imagination...this is a massive misconception that many have. When drawing from the imagination, you need to rely on your visual library - the accumulated mental stockpile of objects, figures, and elements you've studied and observed over time. Expanding this visual library through extensive practice and observation is essential.I don't recommend drawing from imagination for any beginner or more advanced artists.Drawing from memory can be challenging due to our brain's mechanism for storing visuals. If I was to try to draw a portrait from memory, it would look like a 10 year old drew it.That's why I use reference images as much as possible for detailed drawings. We simply don't register every minute detail of what we see. Instead, our brains tend to simplify and categorize information to manage the world around us. Consequently, when we try to draw from memory, we often sketch generalized 'symbolic' images of an object, involving broad details and omitting specifics.For detailed drawings and artwork, yes, you should always use a reference image.However, if you are doing an abstract artwork you can rely more on creativity and imagination. You'd be surprised that even more creative works are often done through a combination of reference images. Reference images can be a powerful tool to enhance your observation skills, understand the basic forms and structures, and achieve accurate proportions. They also offer a valuable means to study everything from complex anatomy to tricky lighting conditions.In the realm of art, tracing is a practice that elicits much debate. Is it okay to trace in art? Yes, it is perfectly acceptable as long as you are not trying to pass off your artwork as done freehand. Plus it also has plagiarism implications too if using someone else's work for tracing.In general, I would not recommend tracing to any beginner artist - since true growth happens when creating your own drawings from your own reference images. There's also been many debates of great artists throughout time secretly using tracing often in the form of reflections to get more accurate proportions and depictions. Tracing is generally viewed as a helpful tool utilized during the early stages of learning and can function as a stepping stone toward freehand drawing. It can be immensely beneficial when employed as a learning technique, particularly for beginners who are aiming to understand perspectives, proportions, and general anatomy.Side note: although tracing is an effective learning tool, it has its ethical considerations when used outside the learning context. Tracing and then passing it off as original artwork falls into the realm of plagiarism, especially when the source is an existing artwork or photograph. Perspective is used to represent depth and spatial relations accurately. However, maintaining accurate perspective in a drawing can be a daunting task for artists, primarily because of the complexity it adds to the process.Link: Check out our post on What Is Perspective here explained with examplesTo start, an understanding of the fundamental principles of perspective is essential. This includes the concepts of horizon line, vanishing points, and how objects appear smaller when they are farther from the viewer. Knowing how these elements interact is key to representing a scene accurately from a specific viewpoint.In terms of architectural, mechanical, or automotive drawings if is your drawing is not done inline with the correct perspective it will immediately be noticeable.Proportions refer to the relative size of different parts of your subject. For instance, if you're drawing a human face, understanding the general rules of facial proportions—like the fact that eyes are usually positioned halfway between the top of the head and the chin—can immensely improve the realism of your sketches.Link: See our breakdown of Facial Proportions hereProportions not being correct is usually on of the most common reasons why your portrait doesn't look accurate and doesn't accurately capture likeness.Drawing with correct placement, much like proportion, plays a crucial role in achieving a realistic depiction. Placement refers to the accurate positioning of different elements of the subject relative to each other. An understanding of placement is pivotal when illustrating multiple objects in a scene or various features in a face. For instance, the placement of an eye too high on a face can affect the overall realism and harmony of the piece.Following along challenges and skills associated with the human figure and face is anatomy.By studying anatomy, you can more accurately produce figures, gestures, and faces.When I first got into figure drawing, I worked through several art books on human anatomy that were extremely beneficial. Like other skills, learning anatomy begins with observation: studying real-life humans or animals, anatomy books or even taking life drawing classes. Start with basic shapes to represent different parts, gradually advancing to detailed anatomy.While hands and faces are often considered the most difficult due to their complexity and expressiveness, don't overlook the importance of other parts. A good grasp of overall human or animal anatomy will provide a framework that will greatly improve your drawing, especially when drawing from memory or imagination. Foreshortening image from Love Life Drawing on YouTubeForeshortening, a technique closely related to perspective and usually used with anatomy or figure drawings, often translates into a puzzle for artists. Foreshortening in art refers to the technique of portraying an object or a figure in such a way that it appears to recede into the background. In essence, it deals with depicting objects or people at an angle to create an illusion of depth.Drawing the human figure in a convincing foreshortened perspective can be particularly intimidating. Imagine trying to draw a figure stretched out, with their feet significantly closer to your viewpoint than their head. Without foreshortening, the resulting figure would appear disproportionately elongated.Drawing recognizable textures is another challenging but necessary skill for harder subjects like human hair, certain facial features like the mouth, and fabric.Textures give your audience an idea of how the subject might feel if it was tangible. For example, drawing the rough texture of a tree bark, the shiny surface of a glass, or the fluffy fur of a dog requires distinct techniques and skills.Textures are best achieved by using a combination of different strokes and appropriate shading techniques. When it comes to drawing, textures can add an engaging level of depth and reality. This part will provide beneficial tactics on accounting for textures.The first significant aspect to note, different textures demand different techniques. Smooth textures like glass or metal, require a lot of precise shading to capture their reflective properties. In contrast, rough textures, such as bark or concrete, demand a more stippling approach, using dots or small marks to create the illusion of a rough surface.Using visual references when attempting to portray a realistic texture is an advantage. Photos can provide an in-depth look at how light and shadow interact with different textures. Also, studying the textures in person can provide haptic information that can be quite beneficial.The last crucial skill is understanding light and shadow, closely linked with shading but having its own significance. It involves comprehending how light behaves—how it hits an object, reflects, refracts, or gets absorbed—leading to the formation of shadows, mid-tones, and highlights.One should be able to identify the light source in a scene, predict how the light would interact with the drawn objects, and represent those light-shadow effects accurately on paper. Keep in mind that light can dramatically affect the mood of your drawing: intense shadows can heighten drama and intensity, while soft light brings gentleness and calm.If you're just starting out and look for some of the easiest things to draw, we have a couple listed here with links to guides on how to draw them:As a beginner, your focus should be on subjects that are simple yet offer an opportunity to learn the basics of drawing.Some good things to draw when first starting out are:gesture drawings fruit or vegetables simple flowers or animals specific, simple facial features Remember, the key as a beginner is to practice regularly and be patient with yourself and practice what you like!Every sketch is a step towards advancing your skill, irrespective of how it turns out. Gradually, you'll see your lines becoming confident and your hand more steady, shaping your way towards more complex subjects and styles.study of mine based on La Nuit by BouguereauMoving from basic to advanced drawing requires dedicated practice, an understanding of foundational principles, and a progressive approach to embracing complexity. Start by mastering simple subjects and gradually introduce more complexity into your drawings. Key to advancement is learning more about the principles of art and consciously applying them to your work. For instance, studying perspective will enhance your landscapes, urban sketches, and even portraits.One effective strategy is to replicate the works of artists you admire. This helps you understand how they create depth, manage light and shadow, or illustrate texture. Renowned artists including Picasso and Van Gogh admitted to learning a great deal from replicating the works of their predecessors.Lastly, don't shy away from seeking feedback. You might consider joining a local art class, connecting with a community of budding artists online, or working under the mentorship of an experienced teacher. Regular feedback from knowledgeable peers can prove invaluable for growth and advancing your drawing skills.Advanced drawing is the ability to render subjects with a high level of accuracy, detail, and depth. Some skills that I would consider advanced are:ability to depict subtly changes in shading ability to draw complex natural figures in detail (like the human figure or face) ability to accurately depict perspective in architectural drawings ability to achieve likeness in portraitsIt involves a deeper understanding of the principles of art and design, such as composition, perspective, lighting, and color theory, as observed in the masterful works of artists like Rembrandt.A defining characteristic of advanced drawing is the ability to depict complex subjects realistically. Drawing an intricate cityscape, for instance, with multiple buildings, people, vehicles, and a variety of light and shadow effects, exemplifies advanced drawing capabilities.Another indication of advanced drawing ability is the control and precision in the artist's strokes. With advanced skills, the artist is capable of creating intricate textures, realistic tonal variation, and depth that make the subjects look three-dimensional on a two-dimensional surface. The use of various techniques like hatching, scumbling and glazing in Leonardo da Vinci's sketches speaks volumes about his advanced drawing abilities.To improve your drawing skills, firstly, you have to practice - there's no way around it.To help with practicing I recommend drawing objects you like! Link: Here is our post with our top drawing tips for beginnersSome of the best tips to improve drawing skills are:practice\* practice with intention (if you struggle with eyes draw eyes everyday) focus on learning proportion, placement, and relationship learn to blend your shades properly (can use a blending stick for this) lastly, lean to add proper highlights with an eraser to make your drawings popIf you're interested in some drawing exercises here are some that have helped me the most:gesture drawing value exercises (where you shade from light to dark 3 dimensional exercises (like drawing a 3d cube or tube)Link: Check out our longer post here with drawing exercises and how to do themFor starters, contour drawing, a single, unbroken line that outlines the object, can greatly enhance your hand-eye coordination and observational skills.Next comes gesture drawing, which is all about capturing the essence of a subject's movement rather than detailing. This is especially useful for drawing living things, as it helps to depict the dynamism and energy of the subject.These there are value exercises, where you practice shading gradients from light to dark. This can significantly improve your understanding of light, shadows, and consequently, provide depth and realism to your drawings.Perspective drawing exercises, especially practicing one, two, and three-point perspectives can elevate your understanding of spatial relationships between objects and help you create a three-dimensional illusion on a two-dimensional plane.To draw things realistically there are of a multitude of factors—observation, understanding form and perspective, and mastering shading—all play pivotal roles in realistic drawing.For more the biggest skill required to draw things realistically are:placement proportion shadingTo draw realistically, it is necessary to study the subject thoroughly. The smallest details often make a significant difference, making it imperative to pay close attention to these finer aspects, like the texture of the skin or the pattern of light and shadow on the subject.Understanding form and perspective forms the backbone of realistic drawing. A thorough grasp of these concepts significantly broadens your ability to represent a 3-dimensional object on a 2-dimensional surface. Shading, the process of adding gradients of black, white, and gray, infuses your 2-dimensional sketch with a 3-dimensional aura. Skills magnify, with more practice, enabling you to accurately depict the way light interacts with the subject and its surroundings.In essence, the practice of drawing things realistically is an ongoing learning process—one that demands continuous observation, exploration, and experimentation.To learn to draw realistically, on average, it can take anywhere from 3-5 years of consistent drawing practice.Essentially, one can start to see significant improvement within the scope of a year if you practice daily. With continued practice at around the 2.5 to 3 year mark you will see your drawings become more realistic.Link: See our post here that answers how long does it take to learn to draw in detailRemember, learning to draw is a marathon, not a sprint. It involves gaining an understanding of forms and dimensions, mastering techniques like shading, gradients and perspective, and nurturing your patience, and returning your patience, and nurturing your patience. Just a side note: realistically does not mean flawlessly. Even the most skilled artists make mistakes and learn from them. It's part of the creative progress. The journey towards realism is one of steady progress, where every little milestone in your artistic journey should be celebrated.Some questions to ask yourself to find your own drawing style are:What kind of art do you like? What kind of medium do you prefer? What type of materials do you prefer? What is your preferred subject matter?Think of your art style as a reflection of your personality and voice, a visual language that you create. It's about finding what components of art — the colors, the textures, the subjects, the techniques — resonate with you and fuse them together to form your unique style. It's created through your experiences, your emotions, your thoughts, and your interpretations of the world around you.The hardest art in the world is hyperrealistic artwork. A hyperrealistic artwork aims to mimic reality so accurately that it often gets mistaken for a high-definition photograph. It demands not just a supreme understanding of light, shadow, texture and color, but also an eagle's eye for detail.To sustain hyperrealism, artists need to spend hours meticulously practicing and creating their art work. Don't underestimate how long hyperrealistic artwork takes. It's not uncommon for an artist to spend 50+ hours on a hyperrealistic work of art. Zack is the creator and main author of LateNightPortrait. As a late starter himself, he believes that anyone, regardless of age, can create something special through practicing art. He spends most evenings drawing portraits and figures while listening to music. When not drawing or painting he can be found going for walks with his wife and attempting (and often failing) to train his dog. Twenty Twenty-Five Designed with WordPress