



Utrecht Art Supplies

Just for Fun: Scholastic exercises you should revisit at any stage of your career

Remember the days when you were first learning to draw and paint? At one time or another, nearly all artists have done at least one of these. Each exercise is designed to sharpen a specific aspect of the craft, and every one originates with a serious masterpiece. Even experienced professionals can benefit from brushing up on the fundamentals, and every one of these projects can be the basis for a full-fledged work of art!

Blind Contour Drawing



Blind contour drawing is executed in one continuous line without lifting the pencil or looking at the paper. This exercise helps

increase accuracy, sharpens spatial awareness and improves the ability to work from memory. (This drawing by Ingres is not a pure blind contour drawing, but it has elements of continuous line, especially in the coat and hands.)

Still Life with White Objects



A still life composed of matte white objects makes it easier to focus on value by eliminating major differences in color and transparency. It's also a great way to develop a keen eye for differences in temperature within neutrals. We used acrylic gesso and flat white spray paint to coat this assortment of objects, including bottles, jars and artificial fruit.

Still Life with Shoes



Old shoes present challenging overlaps and textures, and add a figurative element to still life. "Still Life with Shoes" remains a staple subject for the scholastic portfolio to demonstrate drawing skill. This painting by Van Gogh is loaded with emotional content, and the artist's masterful rendering of the subject makes that content all the more powerful.

Crinkled Paper



It's easy to lose your place in the hundreds of shapes within a piece of crumpled paper. One traditional approach to keeping track of all those wrinkles is to draw them as letter forms. This painting by William McCloskey also incorporates transparency with these tissue-wrapped oranges.

Working from Casts



Study from plaster casts offers the opportunity to work figuratively without a life model, so you can practice fundamentals any time for as long as you like. Replicas of antique sculptures enable you to study the carefully balanced proportions of classical art.

The ability to make casts from life is a useful studio skill that anyone can learn. Modern flexible mold materials make it easy to craft your own collection of plaster models.