FIGURE PAINTING WITH ACRYLICS
Yvette Deas, Lecturer
Email: ydeas@alumni.stanford.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To accurately depict the figure in acrylic paint.
- To understand and exploit gestural and sculptural paint handling.
- To use color theory effectively.
- To use formal and conceptual analysis in the critique of artwork.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND STUDIO PROJECTS*
There will be 2 outside projects.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION
Materials: Pen, Sketchbook.

Overview of course and materials, slides of Figure Painting, emphasis on loose, sculptural paint handling. Acrylics demo by Anna Simson.

Project 1 -- BEGINNERS: Drawings of Full skeleton, Back and Front, with vellum overlay of musculature, and added vellum layer of the figure in the flesh. Additional materials needed: vellum, white paper, red or magenta Prismacolor pencil, graphite pencil, pencil sharpener. You will do 6 drawings in total. First 2 drawings: on good white drawing paper, without tooth, in graphite, on one sheet, draw the front of the skeleton, head to toe. One the other draw the back, head to toe. Draw full view only (no 3/4 or profile). Each drawing is 18" x 24". Use any source you prefer -- there are many
online, but if you decide to buy a book on anatomy for artists, that's fabulous. Do label the major bones (e.g. scapula, femur, etc), neatly. No need to label individual ribs or vertebrae. After you have completed the front & back views, tape your vellum on top (you can buy single sheets of vellum -- no need to buy a pad). Lightly, in graphite first, draw the musculature, and label the major muscles. Everyone please don't forget the sartorial muscle -- terribly useful. Then, using either red or magenta prismacolor pencil go heavily over the outline of each muscle, shading smoothly and lightly in between. If you haven't played with prismacolor pencils before, take a second and doodle. They give a wonderful crisp, saturated line, as well as very smooth shading (and they blend well). The final vellum overlay will be the figure with flesh – you can use any source you like, but be sure that the fleshy bumps line up with the muscles and bones. Final layer using graphite first (lightly), then colored pencils.

Important tips for drawing the skeleton: make marks for head, feet and top of pelvis first. Then shoulders, bottom of hands, and knees. It is very easy to end up with a skeleton with a giant head or tiny feet, or cut off at the knees. Measure the figure against itself. The figure may be male or female, although it is more difficult to find sources for females. Give yourself plenty of time to complete this assignment. It’s worth it!

Project 1 – ADVANCED (If you have done the above Beginner Project): Choose one of the artists discussed in class, research them, and do 3 small ( 8” x 10” as the smallest) studies using their techniques. Note: these are NOT copies of the artist’s work; rather, they are your own work in the artist’s style.

DUE DATE: WEEK 5 (or sooner, if you can!)

WEEKS 2 -- 4: MODEL

*** Week 2, I will come to class 1 hour early to teach anyone interested how to stretch and gesso canvas. For those interested, please bring the added supplies at the end.

Materials required: ALL painting materials, sketchbook, charcoal pencils, vine charcoal, graphite pencils, and one 3’ x 4’ canvas, stretched and gessoed. You may, if you choose (I recommend this), prepare your canvas with a coat of middle value color.

Each Figure Painting class will follow this format: 4 –5 gestures over 20 minutes, drawings in sketchbook, using charcoal pencil and vine. We will choose together one of those poses for the painting. We will then do one 3’ x 4’ painting over the next 2 and half hours. These paintings will be alla prima, i.e. done all at once, in one sitting. Do not work on these paintings after class.

WEEK 5: MID-TERM CRITIQUE

Please bring your previous 3 paintings, Project 1 and a sketchbook and pen.
Project 2 -- Beginners: Drawing the Skull, with vellum overlay of the muscles, vellum overlay of the face in the flesh (with eyeballs, lips, etc). Drawing size option: 9” x 12” or 18” x 24”. All materials and instructions are the same as Project 1. For the final vellum overlay, feel free to use your own face or the face of someone you know or find interesting, i.e. have fun with this! Final layer using graphite first (lightly), then colored pencils.

Project 2 – Advanced: One 3’ x 4’ painting (or larger, if you can transport it), of 2 figures in a setting that allows you to create a mood. Can you create an open-ended narrative with these two figures? Consider your composition carefully with regard to the viewer.

DUE DATE: WEEK 9 (Final critique).

WEEKS 6-8: MODEL
Materials required: ALL painting materials, sketchbook, charcoal pencils, vine charcoal, graphite pencils, and one 3’ x 4’ canvas, stretched and gessoed. You may, if you choose (I recommend this), prepare your canvas with a coat of middle value color.

Each Figure Painting class will follow this format: 4 –5 gestures over 20 minutes, drawings in sketchbook, using charcoal pencil and vine. We will choose together one of those poses for the painting. We will then do one 3’ x 4’ painting over the next 2 and half hours. These paintings will be alla prima, i.e. done all at once, in one sitting. Do not work on these paintings after class.

WEEK 9: FINAL CRITIQUE

Please bring ALL paintings and both outside projects. I will be on hand to help carry, with a dolly.

*Dates and schedule of topics may be changed.

EVALUATION
Grades are based on completion and quality of both in class and out of class assignments, individual progress, effort, and class participation/attendance: 25% Attendance; 25% Effort/Participation; 25% In-class work (preparation, readiness, participation); and 25% Outside projects.

ATTENDANCE
Attendance is crucial in this class. Students will be responsible for all information presented in class and most of the studio instruction and work will be completed in class. More than one unexcused absence will affect the student’s grade in a negative manner. Please come to class on time; being late two times will count as one absence.
MATERIALS

Sketchbook: any that you prefer, that can comfortably fit in the bag you carry daily, minimum size: 8” x 10”.

6 – 3’ x 4’ cotton canvases, stretched and gessoed. Your choice of profile and weight (thinner is cheaper). You may buy them already stretched (and/or) gessoed, or you may stretch them and gesso them yourself (cheaper).

If you decide to stretch your own canvases, you will need the following, additional supplies: roll of canvas, stretcher bars (you can make those as well, if you like, outside of class), stretcher pliers, scissors, staple gun (electric and/or manual), staple remover (regular office), needle nose pliers, gesso, wide utility brush, paint stirrer, bucket approximately the same size as a large gesso bucket.

Acrylic Paints (just the regular acrylic (not fluid or other), heavy body ok if you like): Titanium White, Zinc White (if you can find it – great for flesh), Lemon Yellow (or similar hue), Cadmium Yellow Light Hue, Cadmium Yellow Medium Hue, Raw Sienna (pref) or Raw Umber Light, (or Nickel Azo yellow or Ocher), Cadmium Red Light Hue, Red Iron Oxide (or any red that looks like dried blood), Alizarin Crimson, Viridian or Pthalo Green, Sap or Olive Green, Cerulean Blue Hue, Indigo or a dark Cobalt Blue, Ultramarine Blue, Payne’s Grey, Dioxazine Purple (or Quinacridone violet or magenta), Burnt Umber. Note: for the Cadmiums, if stated, choose one with the word “HUE.” This is the synthetic (and non-toxic) version. Buy medium sized tubes (60 ml) of all EXCEPT Titanium White, Burnt Umber and Ultramarine Blue– big tube (200ml).
Note: do NOT buy anything that says “Basic,” or “Student.” These paints have a lower pigment concentration, and will cost you more money in the long run. Do NOT buy the brand M. Graham, other brands ok. I personally like Winsor Newton and Sennelier, but use others as well.

Mediums: Acrylic matte and/or gloss medium 16 oz, and either a jar of Molding/Modeling Paste (small) or a small bag of marble dust. Any other mediums that excite you!

Brushes: 2” and 3” utility brushes (cheaper at Home Depot), variety of brushes in all shapes (round, filbert and straight) and sizes – at least 10, both bristle and synthetic (and sable or other animal hair, if you like). Don’t worry about whether the brushes say “Acrylic” or not. Note: cheap sets of brushes (approx. $8) can often be found at Michael’s or Amazon.
**Other**: Palette knife – METAL ONLY. 3 large plastic (lighter to carry), glass or metal containers: one to hold your brushes, and 2 for water. They should be big enough to fit your biggest brushes. For your palettes, you should use disposable wax paper palettes. I highly recommend Masterson Sta-Wet Premier Palette, with sponge and sheets. This can keep your paints wet and usable for a week or longer (especially if you put in frig), and will save you a lot of paint (and $), in the long run. Viewfinder – you can by this or make it yourself.

**Optional**: Hair dryer and extension cord (to speed up drying).

Toolbox or other container for paints, pencils, etc..

*Art Supply Stores (Coupons and student discounts may be available for all, please ask):*
Accent Arts, 392 California Avenue, Palo Alto 650-424-1044
University Art, 2550 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061 (650) 328-3500
Dick Blick. Often cheaper than the others, locations in San Francisco and Oakland, Online supplies.
Amazon online.
Michael’s (often cheap for brushes, always coupons online).
Utrecht (stores and online)
Artist and Craftsman – online (also store in Berkeley)
(Coupons and student discounts may be available, please ask the vendor.)

Please note that the cost of materials varies widely. If you are a careful shopper, the cost can be reduced greatly. If you are starting from scratch, total material cost can vary between $300 and $550.