



The Florence Academy of Art

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FOUNDATION IN GRAPHIC ARTS CURRICULUM 2024-2025

FAA Florence Campus

Foundation in Graphic Arts

Andrew Waller - Coordinator

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Office Hours: by appointment

Class Schedule

- Class Times: 9am – 4pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday.
Thursdays are dedicated to individual studio lab time 9am – 4pm / museum visits. During lab time students continue to work individually on their projects with studio assistance.
- Museum visits: a series of guided visits (schedule communicated at the start of each term).
- Anatomy classes: Monday evenings 5pm
- Art History lectures: Friday evenings from 5:30pm (you will find the program posted at school).

Course Description

A comprehensive 1-year program giving students an in-depth preparation in drawing, as well as etching techniques, and materials.

Projects are of mixed length to develop core manual and observational skills alongside developing individual intuition. Pencil, charcoal, sanguine, ink (drawing and printing) will all be explored. Classes are predominantly practical and studio based, the course also incorporates seminars, lectures (anatomy and art history) and guided museum visits. The course is taught by FAA instructors and supervised by the program's coordinator.

Aim of the program

The overall aim of the program is for students to acquire key techniques to support individual artistic development in drawing; a skill considered fundamental to reach excellence in painting, sculpture, or other art forms. Students explore three-dimensional form and confront the human figure (life drawing, portrait, self-portrait) to produce varied works from short sketches, through to fully resolved representations using different media.

Continuation onto each term is automatic upon successful assessment by the faculty during the End of Term Critique.

FIGURE DRAWING

Course Objectives

The figure is the center of the Academy's curriculum, the core of the program. Beginning figure drawing in pencil and Students work predominantly under natural light, drawing from live models. The models return to pose in the same position for the duration of the long pose that may last several weeks. Long-poses are essential to the accomplishment of fully finished drawings.

The student is taught to keep in mind three principal concerns when looking at the live model: proportion, body type, and gesture. In order to achieve those elements, the student may approach the drawing in two ways: linear, whereby the student draws accurately the outline and shadow line, or mass, achieved through the comparison of light shapes vs. shadow shapes. As the student's drawing progresses from simple outline/shadow line or mass, the student applies their developing knowledge of anatomy to give the figure a convincing sense of weight and balance. The student then addresses values in their drawing and keys them to what they see in nature. The black mirror is used to help the student find the value-key of the figure in order to skillfully represent the impression of nature. By relating the values of the figure to the values in the background, the student gives a sense of space and atmosphere within the pictorial plane. (Light is form; shadow is atmosphere.) The last step in the

drawing is working out the transitions in the edges in order to make the forms turn, and create a sense of atmosphere and three dimensions.

Students attend life drawing classes in pencil on Friday. Pencil drawing reinforces the importance of learning to explain the subject's outline and shadow line. By placing the model against a neutral background, students are limited to one flat even-value in the shadow areas; they are not allowed to put background value into the drawing, so the outcome is an outline and a flat, even shadow. Pencil drawing allows the student to understand how far they can take a drawing, from simple outline to dramatic gesture, while being precise and accurate with regard to proportion, body type and gesture on a small scale. It emphasizes the importance of line quality to rendering soft or hard edges thus turning form and creating atmosphere and focus.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of the figure drawing component the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of human anatomy by a sophisticated outline and well designed shadow shapes, as well as descriptive half tone shapes integrated into the big light shape
- Demonstrate proportion among various forms
- Demonstrate skill in dealing with the subtle changes of the living, moving form
- Create edges that give the impression of form turning in space
- Create a convincing impression of weight and balance
- Create a convincing impression of structure and solidity
- Create a convincing impression of light flowing over the form

Class Format

Students receive personal critiques while drawing at their individual easels; also group lecture and demonstration.

Course Requirements

1. A selection of figure drawings in pencil (8 x 10 inches).
2. Six larger format figure drawings that demonstrate appropriate level of competence.
3. Presentation of term projects for final evaluation during End of Term Critique, including all in-class work and any extracurricular projects, sketchbooks, anatomy drawings, old master drawings.

BARGUE DRAWING

Course Objectives

The Bague exercises are designed to strengthen the student's visual relationship with two-dimensional form to help them confront three-dimensional subjects in life. Students will learn the sight-size method of measurement to view the subject with accuracy in order to reproduce it successfully.

The simplified forms of the Bague Drawings allow students to cement the procedure, and develop skill in reproducing the outline, blocking out shapes, and refining line quality. They also begin to

understand the importance of values in turning form. Students begin to learn how to see their subject, and gain precision through practice over many weeks, as well as skill in handling their materials and tools. The student will begin to transfer these concepts to drawing from the model.

Students are required to copy one Barge drawing in pencil and one in charcoal. In order to pass these exercises, the student must correctly draw the subject's outline, proportion and shadow shape, and use skillfully the materials (pencil, charcoal and paper). This requires that the student sees shapes correctly, applies the sight-size method and demonstrates good technical control.

Learning Outcomes

Through the Barge drawings the student will learn to:

- Apply correct procedure to drawing
- apply the sight-size method of measurement in order to view the subject accurately and, create an accurate outline
- translate two-dimensional form in order to later translate three-dimensional form in two dimensions
- draw correct values
- demonstrate clean technique

Class Format

Students receive personal critiques while drawing at their individual easels; also group lecture and demonstration.

Course Requirements

1. One simple Barge (normally 10 x 14 inches) copy in pencil and one more advanced Barge copy (normally 18 x 20 inches) in charcoal that demonstrate appropriate level of competence.
2. One Barge figure Copy

Presentation of term projects for final evaluation during End of Term Critique, including all in-class work and any extra curricular projects, sketchbooks, anatomy drawings, old master drawings.

CAST DRAWING

Course Objectives

Cast drawing is a preparation to sensitize the student's eye to the light and values found in nature, and builds on the skills obtained from the preceding exercises. The cast is a simplified, monochrome, stationary form, usually a reproduction of classical statuary that helps the student to find similar shapes in nature. As such it is the ideal preparation for portrait work.

With cast drawing, unlike Barge drawing, measurements are no longer exclusively scientific: the sight-size method of measurement provides the student with a guide, but accuracy in cast drawing depends on the eye. When assessing a student's cast drawing, the instructor looks for accuracy in line, mass and values.

At this time, students are directed in how to set up their cast in order to create a strong focal point that should be prominent in the finished drawing. This is a fundamental concept: to select and draw an area in complete focus, leaving the peripheral area out of focus, as the eye would see in nature. Students also control the light to create and design interesting shadow shapes.

With regard to values of the cast, as the student begins to represent the impression of what they see, they learn that the value-key must be controlled in the drawing to achieve an accurate impression of reality. This process is part of what instructors will refer to as compressing values. The student learns there is a larger range of value from black to white in nature than in a drawing (the darks come close to being the same, but

the whites do not). While drawing, they must compress the dark and light ends of the value scale to recreate the optical effect of light in nature, and create the suggestion of the form turning on the picture plane, thus achieving a three dimensional quality. The student uses a black mirror as an aid to lower the value-key, and therefore represent the impression convincingly.

Although these values must be convincing in their relationships, and pleasing to the eye, the way students see and reproduce values may differ.

Students are required to copy two plaster casts; the level of complexity increases with each cast. In order to pass these exercises, the student must correctly draw the subject's outline, proportion and shadow shape, and use skillfully the materials (charcoal and paper). This requires that the student sees shapes correctly, applies the sight-size method correctly, and fully controls the technique.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of the Cast Drawing component the student will be able to:

- Apply the sight-size method of measurement in order to view and reproduce the subject accurately
- Compress values
- Translate three-dimensional form into two dimensions
- Create a focal point
- Create the impression of depth, distance, and atmosphere among parts of the drawing

Students will have acquired a deep insight into the theory and historical traditions of drawing.

Class Format

Students receive personal critiques while drawing at their individual easels; also group lecture and demonstration.

Course Requirements

1. Two plaster casts (feature then mask/head) in charcoal that demonstrate appropriate level of competence.
2. Presentation of term projects for final evaluation during End of Term Critique, including all in-class work and any extracurricular projects, sketchbooks, anatomy drawings, old master drawings.

ETCHING

Course Objectives

Students are introduced to Master Etchers of the past, and in the studio select and create an appropriate image to transfer, learning the basic processes of biting, proof-printing, and plate correction to produce their own final prints.

Emphasis is given on the selection and creation of the image to be transferred to the copper plate, with instruction given on what types of drawings to create and the expectation to draw the images to be transferred from life.

The etching component begins at the end of trimester one with exercises in pencil and ink to consider how the drawn mark translates into print. Students will consider how reversing a drawing changes the composition and how line can be used in a variety of ways.

In trimester two students are led through the technical process of working on a copper plate and producing a series of prints in the specially appointed printing studio. Some of the greatest artists have also been printmakers - notably Rembrandt, Ribera and Goya.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of the Etching component the student will be able to:

- Apply their skills to a new medium
- Use variety of line to create a sense of form, light and atmosphere
- Work safely in the preparation and printing of a copper plate

Class Format

Two short exercises at the end of trimester one, followed by 3 weeks of studio-based class at the beginning of trimester two.

Course Requirements

1. Studies in pencil and ink
2. At least one printed image

PORTRAITURE / SELF PORTRAIT

Course Objectives

These exercises are an introduction to portraiture. Initially through copies and then working exclusively in charcoal, with concentration on tonal values. The self-portrait is the culmination of the course and an opportunity to consider the artist's own identity in relation to the growing skill set they now possess.

A successful portrait builds on skills learned in cast drawing, and in addition must show a convincing likeness and the character of the subject.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of the portrait component the student will be able to:

- set up the portrait model with consideration of light on the subject and the space around them
- reproduce a convincing likeness of and character of the subject
- have a basic understanding of how to set-up and use the mirror to create a self-portrait.

Class Format

The portraiture component is undertaken in the third (final) trimester of study in the model room, via group lecture, demonstration, and individual critique.

Course Requirements

Students are required to produce:

1. 2 copies: one in pencil, one in charcoal
2. 1 life-size portrait in charcoal

3. 1 life-size self-portrait in charcoal

SPECIAL PROJECTS, SEMINARS, VISITS

During the course there will be a number of seminars to cover more theoretical aspects of drawing.

These include:

- Keeping a Sketchbook - looking at different ways artists can, and have, used sketchbooks to store information and develop their craft.
- Seminars on perspective, constructive drawing and composition - the majority of the course focuses on the visual and technical aspects of learning to draw. These seminars help to bolster that with an introduction to how an understanding of solid, geometrical shapes, and their orientation in space, help to create a solid drawing.
- Sight-size is a wonderful and important tool, this component gives a sense of other ways to build a drawing.

Museum visits

The objective here, and in conjunction with the Friday lectures, is to understand the value of the city as classroom.

Through a series of planned, guided visits students will

- gain an understanding of the role, and meaning, of disegno as a living characteristic of Florence.
- learn how to interact with historical works of art to guide and inspire their own practice - on a technical and narrative level.

Course Requirements

As these are theoretical components there are no formal requirements beyond being present. The knowledge gained will inform subsequent projects and significantly impact the student's development.

Anatomy, The Living Form
Maudie Brady, Program Director
Monday, 5:00 - 7:00 pm
Email: maudie.brady@florenceacademyofart.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

ANATOMY (3 terms)

Completion of this course is required for successful completion of the program.

Course Description

“The Living Form” is a phrase taken from the 19th century anatomist, Dr. Paul Richer, in his classic text, “Artistic Anatomy”. It describes our goal as draftsmen, painters, and sculptors who study anatomy to see the shape and structure of the human form as it exists in life, as opposed to the altered and fragmented forms of the cadaver, or the static nature of charts and diagrams. Richer believed that the key to understanding form is to draw from life regularly, and to complement this visual method of study with a solid intellectual understanding of the structures of the human body. With its strong emphasis on drawing from life in all courses, students at The Florence Academy of Art study anatomy daily. It is the goal of the Anatomy course to complement these studies and offer students new tools to help them understand the connections between exterior forms and deeper structures.

Weekly classes begin with an hour-long lecture of the skeleton and myology- the study of muscles- then move on to drawing exercises with the live model. Throughout the course a strong emphasis will be placed on morphology, the study of the forms. Students will be encouraged to study from various sources that include selected texts, life casts, 3-dimensional models, the works of master painters and sculptors, live models, and local resources in Florence such as the 18th century human anatomy wax collection at “La Specola” Museum of Natural History. Where possible the course will also include a Spring term field trip for interested students to either La Specola or anatomy museums in Bologna. The drawing portion of the class is designed to help students think more constructively about the volumes of the human body and to be able to commit these forms to memory. Extra work outside of the class is not required but encouraged. Students that miss more than three classes of the term will fail the class automatically.

Course Objectives

To build a solid base of understanding of the forms of the human body to use in future artistic endeavors.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of Anatomy, The Living Form, the student will be able to recognize the forms that make up the human figure and understand their function. By integrating this information into a daily practice of observing the living model, the student can create a believable visual impression of the human figure.

Class Format

This class will meet two hours once a week for 30 weeks. Group lecture, demonstration, and drawing from the skeleton or the model.

Homework Assignments

Students should expect to spend 1-2 hours per week on Anatomy drawing outside of class.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance each Monday at 5pm for the lecture (confirmed via physical sign-in).
2. Presentation of major assignments for final evaluation at the end of term that demonstrates appropriate level of competence (for those wishing to apply for any future full-time programs at the FAA).