



THE COVID COLORING BOOK CHALLENGE 2020

CONTOUR-LINE DRAWING

- Drawing is always about looking closely, about paying unhurried attention — try to look at your subject as though it is the first time you have ever seen it (Many artists will indeed say you haven't ever truly seen anything until you've drawn it, maybe dozens of times.)
- This also means looking (and drawing) S-L-O-W-L-Y. All the information you need is in your subject, so keep your attention there. Drawing, especially contour drawing, is meditative.
- Don't name things in your head. You aren't drawing an eye; you are drawing lines on a page. You aren't drawing a house; you are drawing lines on a page. If you think, "Oh, I'm drawing a leaf now!", you will start drawing what you THINK a leaf looks like — probably the visual shorthand you started teaching yourself back in kindergarten — rather than what is actually in front of you.
- Long, continuous lines are better than many short lines. This allows you to keep your attention more on what you are looking at rather than at your paper and what you are drawing there. The more you keep your eyes on your subject and train your hand to coordinate with your eyes, the more accurate your drawings will become.
- Traditionally, contour line drawings are done in pen. When you draw in pen, you are committing yourself to the process of careful observation, and worrying less about ending up with a perfect drawing. Therefore, erasing is unnecessary. If you want to correct a poorly placed line, just draw it again without worrying about getting rid of the first line. Indeed, if you look at many of the sketchbooks of artistic icons, you'll find many examples of this type of drawings, "errors" and all.
- Put your internal critic on a time-out. A major objective of drawing — indeed any artistic, creative exercise — is to enjoy the process. These things are done on the right side of the brain, where play, surprise, and joy live. It is the left brain that gives us language, drives critical thought, and in the case of learning to draw, interrupts creativity with critical judgments and unproductive standards. So, if you start hearing ANY negative, critical thoughts, just say NO.
- It's hard to slowly, deeply, and carefully look at anything without being impressed with the amazing beauty and diversity in the world around us. In this way, drawing really helps to encourage a sense of appreciation, and fosters a deep sense of gratitude for the simplest things in life.