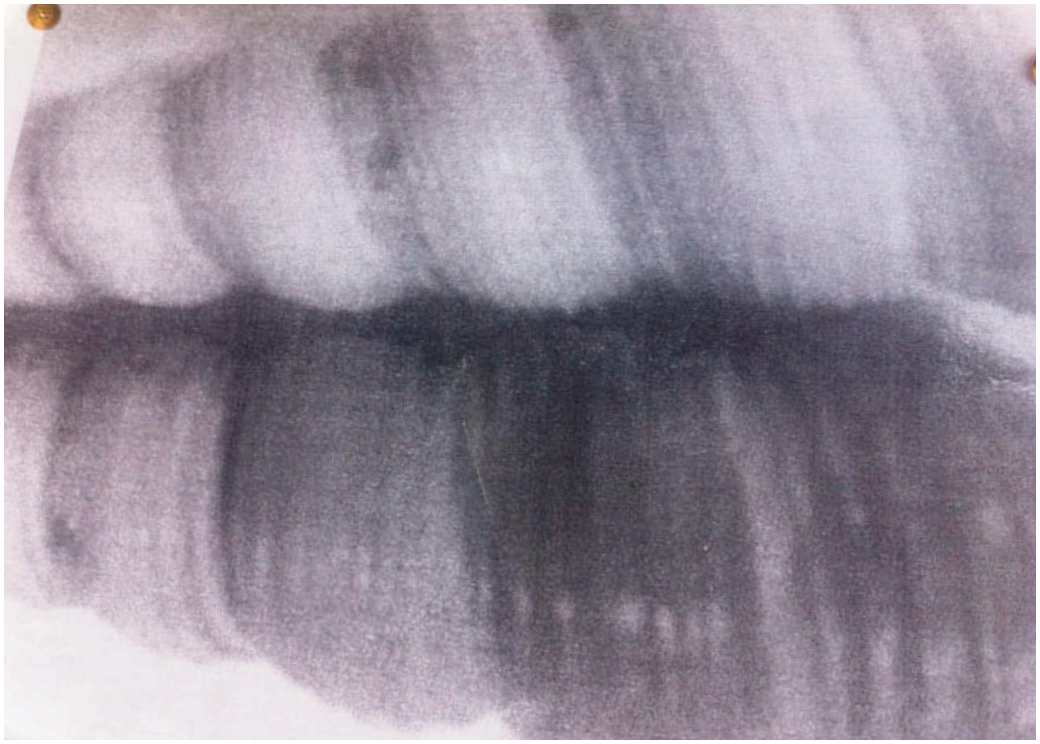

Macro art

By Paul Carney
www.paulcarneyarts.com

Lesson Plan

Big Learning Aim: **Diversifying observational drawing, making it more accessible and appealing to all.**

Description: A quick, simple exercise that will reap huge rewards for the quality of outcome you will get and which is accessibile for students of all drawing abilities. Great for a; *"Help, I don't know what to do with my class tomorrow!"* It is brilliant for exam groups to develop quick, effective folder work and is a good observation lesson too.

Age Suitability: From younger years to exam level.

Time: From 2 hours to 20 hours!

Learning Objectives: Draw from observation in a range of materials, processes and techniques. Learning to see close up.

Curriculum Targets: I use this exercise to help under acheivers. It is suitable for examination level art or for students in lower school. It meets requirements for recording from direct observation; develop work using a range of materials, techniques and processes.

Things you'll need: Stimuli for the task such as – natural forms, seed heads, flowers, shells, leaves, pot pourri, metallic objects, material, crockery, plastic toys etc.

Digital cameras with a Macro setting (nearly all have them, it is a tulip logo) large sheets of drawing papers A1 in size if possible. You need to decide what art materials you are going to let the students work in. It is common to start the exercise with charcoal and white chalk onto sugar paper. You might begin with a pencil drawing onto A4 to gain confidence. After the initial drawing you can develop the project in many ways. You need to offer choices to the students based on what art materials you have available; black ink on watercolour paper, oil pastel and watercolour paints work well, acrylic paint on cardboard or brown paper, chalk pastels, collages, inks or building reliefs using modroc, or printing from textured surfaces, PVA and string. If you are lucky enough to have good computer facilities you can offer a digital option, where students import the photo into Photoshop and manipulate the image.

Preparation: Make sure your cameras are fully charged and you have the connection lead to link them to your PC. Have space on your memory card. I usually set up a workbench with the art materials I am going to offer and allow the students free choice AFTER they have done an initial drawing in charcoal or pencil.

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Success Criteria: Students should have a drawing in black and white and a further study in another material of their choice. This would indicate GOOD PROGRESS. EXCELLENT PROGRESS would be made if they have produced a greater quantity of work to a higher standard. If they have not successfully finished their work to a satisfactory standard then they would be WORKING TOWARDS their target.

Extending: You can do this through the range of materials you offer, by challenging the students to make relief versions of their work or developing large acrylic paintings. These students might develop the concept further using the camera and finding their own subject matter.

Supporting & SEN: Select a smaller piece of sugar paper (about A3 size,) crush charcoal onto a plate or palette then rub an even layer over the paper using tissue. Now use a rubber to rub out the light parts of the photograph and use more charcoal to build dark tones, blending them in. I always get the students to draw or trace an A4 version of the photo, then photocopy it a couple of times. They can then make a collage from tissue paper or magazines and/or paint another version.

Assessment Guidance: In the drawings you are looking for a good range of tones that are nicely applied and blended. Detail would be added to higher ability work and the depth of 'seeing' would be greater. When the students progress into their own work you are looking to assess quality of outcomes, the amount of effort, the skill of the piece and manipulation of he medium.

Tips: Make some watered down ink and add it to old detergent spray bottles to create amazing backgrounds. Make sure they take photos in natural light near a window and without a flash to get dramatic effects. Pictures should be sharply in focus so keep the camera steady!

Artist Links: Look at the work of Sharon Johnstone, who takes amazing close ups of water droplets http://sjfinearts.com or Mandy Barker's brilliant photographs of pollution made into art forms http://mandy-barker.com or how Thomas Saraceno uses microbe structures to make huge installation http://www.tomassaraceno.com

Instructions

1. Select an object to study then spend a few minutes looking at it from different angles, touching it and gaining an intimate knowledge of the object.
2. Give out the cameras and set it to the Macro setting (tulip). Experiment with the macro setting and the lighting of the object to get the most dramatic photo. Take a photo of a detailed close-up of the object so that it goes out of the edge of the frame. You want photos that are in focus, have a good range of tones, colours, textures and details.
3. If your teacher doesn't have enough cameras, make a window frame from a piece of white card by cutting a small rectangle out of it. Then place the window frame close to your object and draw what you see in the frame to fill your page.
4. When you are ready, print out the photos; one in black and white if you can and one in colour (just do what you can!) Sometimes you only get one or two good images in the whole class, so you often have to share one image between two or three people.
5. Produce a black and white copy of the photograph either in shading pencils on A4 paper or in charcoal on sugar paper large A1 or A2 size. The drawing must go off the edge of the paper and be fully shaded, not just an outline.
6. Now choose an art material to develop your drawing into colour. You can make up and invent the colours if you wish, but try to have the same details and tones the photo has. You might make a collage of he image using tissue paper and magazines then paint on top. Perhaps you would like to do an acrylic painting on a piece of card or a watercolour painting. You could do a big drawing using inks, oil or chalk pastels. You can build a 3D picture by gluing paper mache onto strong card then painting it. There really is no limit to what you might do next!