

Seeing Lesson 5: Rubber drawings

Main Objective: To understand when drawing where to put the light and dark tones.

You will need: Charcoal or soft shading pencils and a rubber for each student, paper towels, fixative and A3 paper. Plants are good subject matter for this exercise as are: Skulls, vases, shells and things that reflect light. Personally, I prefer plants or skulls.

Exercise: Get the students to crush some charcoal inside a paper towel, to make a charcoal dust. You might need to do this in advance for younger students. Using a paper towel, rub charcoal dust all over the A3 paper so that it makes a medium tonal area. Try to make the shading as even as you can.

Then, ask the students to look at and study the object. Ask them to 'draw' the dark areas and light areas with their fingers in the air. Get them to squint at the object so that the tones are simplified and more prominent. When they have had enough time to study where the light and dark tones are, ask them to rub out the light parts of the object on their tonal sheet.

This is drawing with a rubber and it is an excellent way to show students how light falls onto an object. Take care when setting up the still life objects so that there isn't too much electric light in the room. I always switch off the lights so that there is only natural light in the room. Placing objects near windows helps to make this exercise easier too. Fix the drawing after this stage is completed.

When they have created the feeling of light in the drawing, give out some charcoal sticks and ask them to repeat this exercise with the dark areas of the object.

Look For's: They need to blend the tones in gradually and smooth them with their fingers. Use the fixative to stop it smudging as they will tend to lose all of the light tones. Some students will try to draw an outline of the objects they are drawing, not shade tones. Be careful of the black finger games, where they try to rub charcoal on other students faces!

Seeing Lesson 5 cont'd

Assessment: Place the drawings in a suitable place where the class can see them all. I usually use an area of the floor. Ask the students to point and identify which work is the most successful in applying and using tone NOT which drawing is the most realistic outline drawing!