

Basic 101: Class 28
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Exploring the Socioeconomic Impact Upon Western Civilization of J.R. Ewing, President Truman, Rambo, the San Diego Zoo, mobster Frank Costello, and the Natural Relationships Between Does and Bucks, and Dogs and Chickens

(Or, simply, "Combination Platter," as you prefer)

In recent classes, we have covered aspects of effectively rendering glass, water, and, most recently, metal. In the introduction to the metal class, I spent a fair amount of time going on about my theory of the importance of psychology in art, and how most of our successes and failures can ultimately be traced back to either a positive or defeatist psychological outlook on the part of the artist. Now, I said that we would address that at greater length in the future, so I am not going to launch into a long lecture here! However, I feel that the subject bears mentioning this week, as it will play a vital role in determining your success or failure with the assigned project.

In class 27, I pointed out that to a significant degree, rendering glass, water, and metal are essentially the same. They all rely on high contrast, very dark darks, and very bright highlights in order to be most convincing. Simplified even further, they, like any other subject to be rendered, amount to nothing more than a collection of lights and darks. If you render those effectively, then your subject is going to be convincing.

It is important to note that psychology comes into play not only with you, the artist, but with the viewer as well. If you render your light and shadow accurately, and you give correct form to your subject, then the viewer is going to "see" what you want him to see. If you draw a drinking glass and place your lights and darks in an expert, convincing manner, then the viewer is going to process that information and see it as a drinking glass. On the other hand, if you were to scan an extreme close-up of a small area of that drinking glass, revealing no specific form, and tell the viewer that it is a close-up of a piece of metal, the viewer would applaud you for rendering such beautifully realistic metal! In both cases, the viewer would be correct.

And without further ado, that brings us to the dreaded class 28 assignment.

Assignment: Combining similar elements/textures in a convincing composition

This class will be three weeks in length, to allow for patient development of your projects, and to allow yours truly to prepare the pen and ink class, which will most likely be class 29. Your assignment in this class is simple enough, if you can get around your initial horror at the prospect of doing what I'm asking! Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to create a logical composition containing glass, water, and metal. You are free to use your own reference, but it must be posted. Alternatively, you may use any of the references below, which have been provided by our beloved photographer extraordinaire, Stacy! Thanks to Stacy for your help, and to Judi for resizing and all the other stuff that I am too dense to figure out myself! 😊

I would suggest that you read through the classes on glass, water, and metal, as there is a lot of good information in there on how to render each subject. Some techniques vary depending on the specific type of glass, water, or metal that you may be creating, and there are many tips throughout the links below.

[Class 23: Glass](#)

[Class 24: Water](#)

[Class 27: Metal](#)

I also had a discussion with Stacy today about something that I don't think came up in the previous classes, so I'll pass along here what I told her, and hopefully some of you may get some use out of it. Using Stacy's picture in the metal class as an example, she is rendering two distinctly different types of metal in the same composition, and doing this on a somewhat textured surface. The cookie cutter in her picture is sort of a brushed metal, not slick and shiny. In this case, the natural texture of the paper lends itself very well to achieving the look she is after. However, the other dominant texture in her composition is a slick, shiny stainless steel bowl with more of a mirror finish. For this, I advised Stacy to flatten the tooth of her paper within the area of the bowl, in order to eliminate the problem of the tooth pattern showing through and working against her. This will help her achieve a slick, smooth look to the bowl that might otherwise be difficult to pull off on such textured paper.

I'm not reinventing the wheel here or anything; anyone who has read J.D. Hillberry's book on realistic textures will know exactly what I'm talking about. If you have this book, it's worth reading this section, because he explains it quite thoroughly. For those of you unfamiliar with this procedure, the simplest way to do it is to use the back end of a drawing pencil (metal-capped ends work best) to press down the tooth in the area that you want to be smooth. This is done PRIOR to applying graphite. It's time-consuming, but it works perfectly. Just be careful not to scratch or otherwise damage the surface as you go.

Another helpful tip that so many (myself included) sometimes forget is that, when you are rendering an object that is seen through water or through glass, those values are muted. This creates the illusion of form and thickness to the glass or water. Also remember that the same principle applies with respect to distortions as seen through glass or water. In both cases, you can manipulate your composition for maximum effect by placing part of the object outside of the glass, water, etc... Allow the contrast of values between the unobstructed portion of the object and the portion viewed through the prism of glass or water to heighten the depth and realism in your piece.

Happy Drawing!



I don't want to rain on anyone's parade or anything, but before people go nuts drawing all kinds of strange things with no point of reference, please remember that part of this assignment is to post your reference. This is not a

requirement to be mean or stifle creativity, it is to help me, you, and others see clearly whether or not you are rendering your subject correctly.

I told Anita this this morning - on the issue of combining pics, if you are proficient enough to do that and make the proper lighting adjustments and all that good stuff, then have at it! I just don't want people experimenting with that sort of thing if they aren't sure what they're doing. So anyone who wants to go that route, just be prepared to get raked over the coals if you screw your lighting/proportions/perspective/spatial relationships all up!

I think it needs a little tweaking still, but I'll let you all tell me.

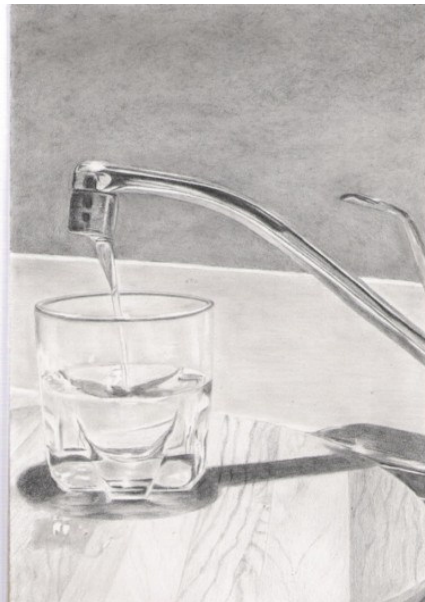
Mary

Excellent excellent work, Mary! And the bg looks fantastic!

Troy

Troy, you mean I don't have to do anything else to it!

Mary



Mary you seem to have lost a bit of your spilled water. Or is that the scan? It looks less noticeable now. That's the only thing I would mess with, but not unless it's an easy fix. You know that best because you have it right there in front of you.

I know you pretty much thought I was crazy when I told you to do the background that way, but hopefully you now see that it does work nicely. Now that it's done, are you glad you did it that way? Or was it more hassle than its worth? (btw.. for the upcoming portrait class... what I just had you do with the bg is very very similar to how I do skin if you're interested in pursuing that.

Actually Mary I think you're right. The wood will look better if you vary your values more and put some more darks in there, but don't get carried away. See the far left edge of the cutting board, behind the glass? I'd darken that the same as that dark stripe on the right end of the board. This will help separate it from the counter. Also the darker stripe that the water is spilled onto - darken that the same way, but ONLY the parts that do NOT have water on them. Keep the values muted the way they are in the area where the water is. This will help your water stand out, and should balance out the values of the board well!

Troy

Here is another post with some tweaking done. Troy the water shows up much more in real life, for some reason everything looks lighter in the scan.

Mary

Mary that looks terrific!

Troy

