12 BIGGEST DRAWING MISTAKES EVERY FINE ARTIST MUST AVOID

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Introduction

Hello,

As the fine art teacher and the founder of the Drawing Art Academy, I have met many fine art students around the World who had some erroneous beliefs about drawing. Their points of view sometimes reflected their drawing techniques knowledge gaps. In many cases flawed thoughts are passed by semi-professional art teachers who are not good fine artists themselves.

In the last 100 years the world has seen a gradual but steady decline in traditional fine art skills. This is mainly because of the direction contemporary art is developing. No longer good drawing skills are essential for making a career in art. Who needs a drawing skills if a plastic bag full of rubbish can be called a piece of art if its placed against the wall in some contemporary fine art gallery.

Nevertheless, I am very glad that so many students in various countries are ego to study the realistic fine art. The appreciation of beauty and celebration of the millennium old traditions of the fine art are still in demand. I am very happy that you are interested in traditional drawing techniques and want to improve your drawing skills.

Why should you be listening to me today?

My fine art education comes from intensively studying easel drawing and painting for 15 years from the age of nine. I have drawn and painted for as long as I can remember myself. I was fortunate to get very professional fine artists as my art teachers. My fine art education combines three separate 5-year courses – Fine Art School where I studied Drawing, Painting, History of Art, Decorative Arts, and Sculpture, followed by a 5-year course at the Academy of Art, department of Easel Painting and Drawing.
And finally, I spent 5 more years obtaining the university degree, and becoming a professional fine art teacher.

Since then fine art has been an essential part of my professional life. During several years after graduation, I was doing personal exhibitions in Europe and North America. My artworks found their home in collections in many countries around the globe. After settling down in the UK, my creative career found a new application in digital-, industrial-, graphic- design and marketing. The drawing skills and practical knowledge of fine art greatly helped me. The ability to express myself creatively would be very limited without the foundation of every art – Strong Drawing Skills.

I never stop painting and drawing. The skill of drawing is for life.

Presently I am teaching fine art students over the Internet as it helps to provide value to so many people around the globe who would not be able to benefit from me otherwise. No more of my personal time nor countries borders limit the way students can learn skills and techniques of drawing and painting.

Once you have learned how to draw, you have this wonderful gift for the rest of your life.

Now, I will explain the 12 erroneous ideas that every drawing master must be aware of.
Erroneous belief #1: A Solid Drawing Skills are not essential for the fine artist anymore.

This goes to the philosophical question “What is the Fine ART?” If your idea is that art is something shocking, completely useless that can be labeled with a ridiculously high price tag for no other reason than “you don’t understand it, because it’s art,” then I have to agree, no drawing skills will help here. It is heartbreaking that the saying has developed in last few years: “He’s not a contemporary artist, he can draw.”

You have to make a decision, either you value centuries-old traditions of beauty and attractiveness of art. If, in your opinion, art has some purpose to glorify, stylize or truthfully portray the real world around us or your own inner imaginary world and ideas, then drawing is the key skill to help you achieve this purpose.

Drawing is an imperative foundation of various arts – painting, sculpture, decorative arts, architecture, industrial, and graphical design. Possessing strong drawing skills is a necessary component to being a master of your creative profession.
Imagine a musician who did not bother to learn notes nor practice harmonies. Would you instantly recognize by listening to his cacophony that he isn’t a professional musician?

Or how about a doctor, who did not spend enough time learning basic skills of his profession and decided to operate on a live person? Would you be happy to be his patient?

Would you board an airplane knowing that the pilot did not study what it takes to be a pilot? You may say, but in art no human life is in danger. That is true, but it is not an excuse for fine artists not to study the original drawing skills.

If you want to be a fine artist, you must develop your creative skills by getting the most out of drawing education to be free to create your art without any limitations.

In the Drawing Academy, we focus the educational process on delivering to you, as a fine art student, the fundamental and most necessary drawing techniques, so you could improve your drawing skills even if you have never drawn before.
Erroneous belief #2:

It is more important to learn how to express yourself in art before or instead of studying the drawing skills.

Do not get me wrong here; the ability to express yourself in fine art is crucial for a fine artist. This is what makes you unique in art and therefore is essential element of your creative career. However, you do not want to handicap yourself and severely limit your creative abilities by not having the necessary drawing skills.

Answer honestly to yourself the following question: “If you want to make a great piece of art, but your hands cannot draw creative ideas you have in your head, would it limit your ability to make the intended artwork?”

Did you have such situations when you imagined something really great and creative, you started to draw your ideas and after a while you realize that result is nowhere near what you wanted to create? It might be still a good artwork, and people around you wowed by it, but deep inside you know that the results is inferior to your imaginary picture.

Would it be great to have an ability to express yourself in art with the freedom of craftsmanship that strong drawing skills enable you?
I had discussions with many students who were getting the only ‘express yourself’ art education. Some of them were advocating such educational approach, whereas others were concerned that year after year they did not master what it takes to become a skillful fine artist.

The truth is, not many fine art institutions teaching how to draw these days, most of them are just providing such guidance as “be creative and express yourself” without giving the craft skills how to do so. This goes back to the fact that so many art teachers are not professional artists themselves, they did not get the drawing skills from their teachers and nowadays passing even less skills to next generations. If a student is lucky to have a natural talent, he might have a chance to become a skillful fine artist. What about the rest?

Fortunately, the fine art is based on basic skills like drawing that can be learned, practiced, and mastered. Here’s the big discovery – drawing skills can be mastered by anyone who has desire and will to do so.

No matter what age or sex you are, left or right handed, your race, your religion – none of these matters if you want to become a better drawing master. You can learn how to draw starting today. Even if you have been drawing poorly all your life or have not drawn since childhood, you still can take the drawing course from a professional drawing teacher and improve dramatically your drawing skills.

As a student of the Drawing Academy you will discover how to improve your drawing skills so you will be able to draw what you want, how you want.
Erroneous belief #3:

I need to learn how to draw a particular subject like people or animals, or cars, etc.

My answer is a no-nonsense statement: if you have the necessary drawing skills, you can draw everything you see or can imagine without any limitations, even if you have never done this particular subject before.

When you know how to draw, and someone asked you “Can you draw a girl, or can you draw a car?” you would be smiling in return. Yes, you can draw. Full stop. It doesn’t matter if you have never before draw something like a superman for example; if you have drawing skills and necessary knowledge of human anatomy, perspective, drawing techniques, etc. you will be able to draw him.
To put it in perspective, let’s say you have learned to drive a car and now you have all the necessary driving skills and knowledge of traffic rules, etc. When someone asked you: “Can you drive a Mercedes, or can you drive a Ford?” you would take it as an amateur question. Yes, you can drive; in fact you can drive any consumer car available on a market and any car that will be developed in the distant future.

It is like asking a professional chef: “Can you cook a sausage, or can you cook a steak?”

Yes, you know he can! Even if this sausage came from a brand new manufacturer and the cook had never seen this sort of meat combination before, yes he can cook it.

At the Drawing Academy, I am teaching the key drawing skills. This education is not based on subjects like “How to draw a girl” or “How to draw eyes,” etc. Instead I am providing video lessons on how to draw professionally, so you would be able to draw a girl, and to draw a face, and so on because you will get skills to draw anything you like, anything you see or can imagine. This is the most essential skill you will have to progress with your creative career.

So you will be able to draw anything you can imagine if you study and practice well the skills of drawing.
Erroneous drawing approach #4:

Drawing what you see instead of drawing what you know.

Many art students are taking a very simplistic approach to the drawing, they draw what they see, not what they know or imagine.

I have to explain it in details. For example, you are drawing a still life with a vase standing on a table and a book placed next to it, a drapery goes around the vase and the book, partly covering these two objects. You might just depict what you see – visible edges of the vase standing on the table, a corner of the book showing up from under the drapery. All looks good to you, as you have used to this view.

Albert Einstein once said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.” It is so true. However, the irony in drawing is that you have to draw imaginary things to depict realistic objects.
A spectator comes along, and he sees that on your drawing or painting the vase is floating above the table and the book intersects inside the vase under the drapery. What went wrong? You just drew what you saw, not what you knew or imagined.

Your drawing or painting would look much more believable when you draw what you know.

Continuing with the same example, a still-life would benefit greatly when you start your drawing as if all object are totally transparent, and you could see through them. You instantly will see that the vase is not touching the table if your drapery, covering the vase’s lower part would be transparent. The same goes for the book. If you draw the imaginary edges of the book, covered by the drapery, you would avoid its intersection with the vase.

There are many other imaginary lines you shall deploy in your drawing. For example, the imaginary vertical line that goes right in the middle of the round vase – it is vertical axes. The imaginary horizontal lines that serve as main axis of the vase’s ovals – its top, middle, and bottom circular edges. The imaginary lines of two-point perspective, which cross over in the vanishing points. The imaginary lines, which indicate relationship and angles of your main drawing masses, and so many other imaginary lines, which help you to make a realistic drawing.
The same goes for all other genres: portrait drawing, human figure drawing, landscape drawing, animals drawing, and so on. All drawing requires you to know the subject and draw what you know using some helpful imaginary lines rather than just what you see.

Of course, you may erase all those imaginary lines after you have constructed a drawing in right proportions, and helping guides are no longer required.

You may say that you have seen some beautiful drawings done with no indication of those imaginary lines whatsoever. There is one secret you shall know. Every professional fine artist uses those lines. Sometimes an artist draws these lines on a paper, sometimes he just imagines them in his head, and sometimes imagination of those lines happens subconsciously, so he is not actively thinking about angles and proportions.

To make your way toward such level of skills that imaginary lines are just that imagined in your head, takes some practice and knowledge. If you are a beginner, it is better to draw helping lines and later decide whether you would like to keep or erase them.

At the Drawing Academy your will see in almost every fine art video lesson how to draw what you know. I will teach you how to use imaginary lines that will help you to take your art to the next level.

Once again, to master the art of drawing you shall draw what you know and imagine rather than just what you see.
Erroneous drawing approach #5:

Drawing people without the knowledge of human anatomy.

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Everyone instantly recognizes the difference between amateur and professional portrait or human figure. Why is it so? What it takes to draw people like a professional artist?
After the decline of the Roman culture medieval art lost those antic traditions and for many centuries figurative paintings and sculptures were very simplistic, I would even say amateurish.

This was due to the church prohibiting any practical study of anatomy by fine artists.

Until the Renaissance era, when several artists like Michelangelo Buonarroti and Leonardo da Vinci, despite the danger of being prosecuted for illegal at a time corpse's dissection, ventured into unknown subject of the human anatomy. Armed with the anatomy knowledge these artists created the greatest works of art human civilization have never seen before.

The answer to this question becomes obvious when we look back in the history of art.

Ancient Greek and Roman sculptors had a good understanding of human anatomy and created beautiful busts, portraits, and human figure sculptures now displayed in various museums around the world.
How critical to a fine artist to know the subject of a human anatomy?

Let us consider the following example. How important for a car designer to know what is inside a car to design a great looking vehicle? Of course he must be aware of the “bones” or chassis and “muscles and joints” or engine and gears inside the car.

Do you still believe that fine artist can draw great figurative artworks without any knowledge of the human anatomy?

This coincides with another erroneous belief that it is enough for a fine artist to draw what he sees rather than what he knows. In fact, the figurative drawing is mostly what you know about anatomy instead of what you see.

Of course you, as a fine artist, do not draw the portrait starting from the skull, wrapping it with flesh and finally covering with a skin. However, such process might go inside your head when you draw a portrait. You should understand how skull bones affect the proportions of the head, how facial muscles move lips, jaw, eyebrows, and make emotions on a face.
I have good news for you; the knowledge of all bones, muscles, and tissues is not required. You are not a doctor; you are the artist. However, you must know and understand at least the basic anatomy of the skeleton and skull as well as main muscles under a skin. Such knowledge will propel your figurative drawing skills to a much higher level.

At the Drawing Academy you will have special video lessons dedicated to the topic of human anatomy for fine artists.

You will discover all main aspects of this subject - how to draw human skull and what bones makes the skull, what important facial muscles influence the shape of the human face. You will also see detailed video lessons on the construction of human skeleton, and most important muscles of the human body every fine artist must know. This also includes the anatomy of human hands and feet.

On examples of dynamic anatomy you will see how to draw human figure, portraits, and hands in movement under various angles. All these lessons will give you a valuable resource of better understanding how to draw a man, how to draw a girl, how to draw eyes, how to draw hands, how to draw feet and so on.

If you are complete beginner these lessons will be a great springboard for you to understand and master the drawing of human figure and human face. If you are an advanced fine artist, it is always helpful to refresh your knowledge of the human anatomy so needed for fine artists.
**Erroneous drawing approach #6:**

Drawing objects without a knowledge of perspective.

*Every fine artist must be familiar with the perspective in the drawing.*

The word “perspective” derives from Latin *perspicere* that means ‘to see through’. This translation coincides with the drawing approach #4 described above – fine artists should draw what they know as if they see through all objects rather than what is visible in reality.

There is one fact you, as a fine artist should be aware about - it is impossible to draw a picture of 3-dimensional world on a two-dimensional surface like paper, board, or canvas without distortion of depicted objects.

However it is possible to minimize those distortions by choosing the most suitable kind of perspective and therefore the knowledge of perspective is the 'must-have' for every fine artist.

During the course of the history of art the rules and appreciation of perspective drawing were changing.
Starting from Egyptian frescoes and drawings on papyrus ancient artists used a "vertical perspective." Perspective in Egyptian art is very different to the contemporary kind. The rules of perspective in ancient Egypt evolved to a certain degree of excellence that served many generations of Egyptian pharaohs. It would be wrong to say that Egyptian perspective was incorrect, as no perspective can depict flawlessly the real world on a flat surface, including the one we are using today.

Russian iconography artists developed an understanding of perspective to another level. From 10th to 15th centuries they created a style that is a reverse perspective. In Russian Orthodox perspective a viewer can see, for example, four planes of a cube instead of three. Scientists say that this kind of perspective makes total sense as human brain processes visual information exactly in this way.
Since then in the 14th..17th centuries, Renaissance artists in Italy and Northern Europe took a scientific approach to study perspective.

With the development of a *camera obscura*, fine artists could do optical studies of perspective and established rules that are in place until present days.

Optical perspective is very apparent in photography. Because so many contemporary artists use photographs in one way or another in the process of creating their artworks, optical perspective is something you shall be aware of.

*In the Drawing Academy Course you will see comprehensive video lessons on the subject of perspective. You will discover fundamental rules of one-, two-, three- and four-point perspective and learn how to apply those rules in practice. Your drawings, enriched with appropriate perspective will look more realistic and pleasing to a viewer.*
**Erroneous drawing approach #7:**

**Drawing without the knowledge and appreciation of golden ratio.**

**Golden Ratio or Golden Proportion is present in every aspect of life.**

Whether you draw a human figure, composing a still-life or making an ornamental composition, you will benefit from the knowledge and application of Golden proportions.

For last two and a half millenniums the subject of Golden Ratio fascinated people. The Golden Ratio can be found in nature, it is also applied to fine art, architecture, financial markets, optimization, industrial design, painting – the list is endless. Everything around us in organic world as well as everything created by man comes with proportions, and those proportions correlating with the divine ratio making objects look beautiful.
Mathematicians, engineers, fine artists, architects, and sculptors – all agree that object proportioned in accordance to the Divine Ratio looks pleasing to a human eye.

You, as a fine artist must be aware of the Golden Proportions and know how to use them in your art.

*In The Drawing Academy you will discover what the divine proportion is and how to apply it to your drawings.*

*In several in-depth videos you will see:*  
- how to calculate divine proportions;  
- how to find golden proportions in the greatest works of art by well-known artists;  
- how to make your very own golden gauge and;  
- how to use this tool in composing your artworks.
Erroneous drawing approach #8:

It does not matter how to hold a pencil.

During my career of a drawing and painting teacher, I have met quite a number of artists and art students who missed the fundamental skill of holding a pencil in the right way. Many of those artists had already graduated from the art colleges and schools. To my question “were they being taught how to hold a pencil?” they were surprised and responded, “Is there such thing as the right way?”

Yes, there is, and the earlier you, as a fine artist, master this basic necessary skill, the better your drawing progress will be. You see, the correct way of holding a tool inevitably influences the performance.

If you know anything about the golf, you would agree that correct grip and swing is the ‘must have’ by any professional golfer. There is no point of spending hundreds of hours practicing hitting a golf ball unless you hold a golf club in the right way. The same goes for holding a pencil. There are several grips you may employ, depending on the position of easel and scale of the artwork.

*In the Drawing Academy you will see an especially dedicated video showing how to hold a pencil. With this so necessary skill you will benefit from the freedom and precision of the pencil movement. You will see on my own example in every video with drawing process the right way to hold a pencil.*
Erroneous drawing approach #9:

Rendering shades without lifting the pencil.

With so many “how to draw” videos available on Internet I am very much surprised of how few of those artists have strong professional shading techniques.

Rendering shades without lifting a pencil is acceptable for a four-year child who never took a proper drawing class.

Scribbling is also good enough for a fast disposable sketch. However, if you want to excel in drawing, learning shading and hatching techniques is essential.

*In the Drawing Art Academy, I will show you the multitude of ways how to render shades and how to use various hatching methods. You will benefit from my own examples in every video with a drawing process.*
Erroneous drawing approach #10:

Relying on tools like rulers, pair of compasses and grayscale value cards instead of training your hand and developing essential skills of visual judgment.

You might have seen some online video tutorials advocating such tools as grayscale values.

You might also rely on a ruler for drawing long straight lines or compass for drawing circles.

You have to train your eye to distinguish even slight differences between tone values. As a fine artist, you shall develop so necessary visual skills of recognizing tonal values as well as training your hand to draw lines as you intended, rather than relying on helping aids of a ruler or compass and grayscale values cards.

Here’s one example. As a baby you most likely have been transported in a baby carriage before you have learned walking on your feet. Both methods – walking and riding in a carriage give the same result of getting you from point A to point B. However, your parents wanted you to learn to walk, as relying on your skill of walking would serve you for the rest of your life.

The same goes for drawing. You may use a grayscale card to judge the tonal values in the beginning. At the same time, practicing your visual judgment is much more important and will help you to perfect your drawing skills.

Also, practicing your hand drawing skill will improve your ability to control the pencil with precision and freedom you want to have.

Using such tools as ruler, compass, and grayscale values cards is the same for a fine artist as for a walker to walk with help of crutches. You do not want to have “lame” drawing skills.

At the Drawing Academy, we want you to have the best drawing skills, and therefore will give you video tutorials on traditional drawing techniques that served many generations of greatest fine artists.
Erroneous drawing approach #11:

Using Five-pencil drawing method instead of relying on one or two pencil grades and trained hand.

Some art teachers promote the 5-pencil drawing method, which is using hard grade pencils for lights and soft grade pencils for shades.

I will explain this erroneous method on the following example.

Let say you drive a car and want to go faster. You just simply push harder on the accelerator pedal to do so. You do not stop and change a car engine for one with more horsepower. Vice versa, going slower does not require changing an engine to a weaker one.
Graphite pencils are graded from 9H to 9B going from hard to soft grades. Here's how it goes: 9H, 8H, and so on, 2H, H, F, HB, B, 2B, and so on, 8B, 9B. There is also the U.S. system that uses numbers only; the approximate correlation between these two systems as follows: #1 is B, #2 is HB, #2½ is F, #3 is H.

Yes, you have to choose the right pencil for the job. Let us say H5 grade is unlikely to provide a deep tonal value no matter how hard you push it. So if you plan your artwork to be in a certain tonal range, you should choose one or maximum two pencils that will deliver the darkest value you need.

Changing multiple pencils with different hardness for varying tonal values is the handicapped approach.

If you want to become a proficient fine artist, you must rely above all on your hand skills to draw the lightest and the darkest values a pencil can provide.

Your talent depends on your skills, not on your tools.

Here's one story that illustrates this point. One very talented photographer was invited to a dinner and showed his photo works to a hostess. “Oh, you must have a very good camera” she commented. After the dinner he paid back her a compliment. “What a delicious dinner it was, you must have a very good pan.”

So using one or two pencils shall give you brilliant results when you have necessary shading and hatching skills.

Relying on multiple pencil grades would serve you an unwanted favor of being handicapped by tools instead of developing your drawing talents and skills.

*In the Drawing Academy you will discover how to develop your natural drawing talents.*
Erroneous drawing approach #12:

Smudging the graphite pencil for softer effects.

When you see someone smudging a graphite pencil on paper with a finger or stump, you know this person is amateur artist.

The practice of graphite pencil smudging is as inappropriate as going to a very expensive French restaurant, ordering a 5-course meal and asking to blend all five courses together because you are going to eat them all anyway. You just do not do that. So you don’t do graphite pencil smudging.

I have to say that there are other mediums like charcoal or carbon sticks or pencils, which can be smudged by a stump to achieve smooth gradations of values. However, graphite pencil shade rendering shall be done in strokes and crosshatching without any smudging.

In the Drawing Academy, you will discover the correct ways of both methods – smudging the charcoal and carbon pencil as well as rendering shades in graphite pencil in strokes and crosshatching.
Conclusion

Let us recap how you can benefit from the Drawing Academy Course:

1. As a student of the Drawing Academy you will get video lessons that you can use to improve your drawing skills.

2. Your improved drawing skills will help you to freely express yourself in art.

3. You will discover drawing techniques and approaches that will enable you to draw confidently anything you may see or imagine.

4. You will discover how to greatly improve your art by drawing what you know instead of what you see.

5. In the Drawing Academy you will get video lessons on human anatomy, knowledge of which is required to draw people and portraits professionally.

6. You will discover necessary information on how to draw in perspective.

7. Video lessons on Golden Ratio will enable you to improve your understanding of eye pleasing proportions and will equip you to create better proportionate artworks.

8. In the Drawing Academy you will discover the correct way of holding pencil so your drawing will benefit from precision and freedom of pen-strokes.

9. By watching how to draw video lessons you will discover professional shade rendering by stroking and crosshatching.

10. In the Drawing Academy you will discover how to master your drawing skills, so you will be able to draw without such helping aids as rulers, compasses, and grayscale value cards.

11. By watching the Drawing Academy video lessons, you will realize how to rely on your trained hand while drawing without limitation of drawing medium.

12. In the Drawing Academy, you will discover various methods of drawing in charcoal, carbon pencil as well as drawing in graphite pencil, and working in pen and ink.

For more information and to enroll on the Drawing Academy Course, please visit http://DrawingAcademy.com