

David Rankin Virtual Zoom Workshop Sketching & Painting Animals

featuring the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
Saturday, January 15 & Saturday, January 22, 2022
1:00pm to 4:00pm EST

We thank David for this incredible Zoomshop, the second Rankin workshop offered by the Euclid Art Association via zoom. What better way to offer a workshop in mid-January in NE Ohio! No traveling, no snow, no worries and in the comfort of our own homes. Karyn from Idaho and Maria from Georgia joined us, too. There were 10 zoom participants, which allowed David time to give us each his personal attention. David started the session by explaining that we would learn a different way of drawing and approaching a subject and watercolor. "It's dynamically effective and will change the way you paint in watercolor....it will make you better."

We had homework assignments before and between sessions. This allowed David to assess our skill level and direct the class instruction to what was needed most. Drawing is at the core of his creativity. And that's where we started, too. David went on to explain that we would only use Payne's Gray to do little gray studies or what he's now calling "Light Studies" in our sketchbooks. These are meant to be studies and not a painting. However, "If done correctly, color will be easier", he said. He gave an example of his Clouded Leopard watercolor (sold for \$1000) and his gray study. The gray study gave him the opportunity to see what needed to be changed as he approached his larger watercolor. Notice the different angle of the leopard's head.

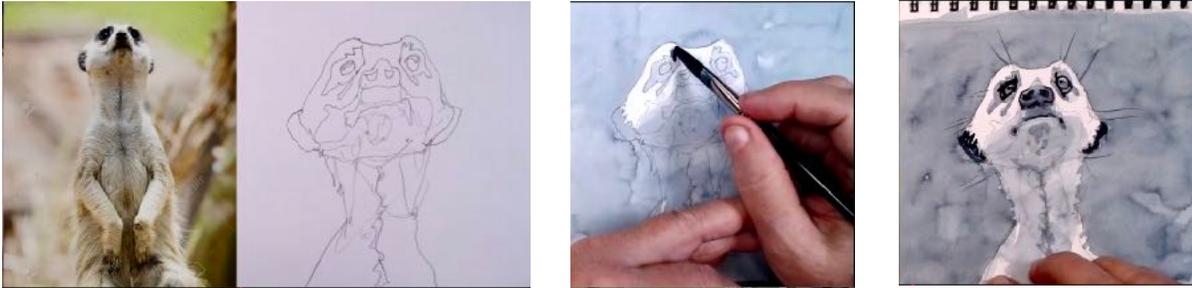


In reviewing our pre-workshop homework, David could easily see what we were doing incorrectly.... too many lines, lines too dark or too light, not committed to the line, etc. David said to simplify the drawing by drawing shapes. Make a consistent strong line and add lighter line work to show light and shadow areas. Use his 'stop, look, go' technique. *Start sketching, stop but keep the pencil on the page, look at the image and decide where to go next. Don't lift the pencil off the page.* Start the sketch at the top of the head or look for a dominate large shape to attach the rest. It's like doing a puzzle, one piece at a time. *(We know from previous classes with David that for birds start with its beak and for portrait of a person, with their hair or hat and for complex subjects, start with what's closest to you.)* A quick drawing should be 1 to 5 minutes....."don't spend 20 minutes!" To summarize, David said, "draw one shape after another; don't erase anything; lighten up on the pressure to draw shadow structures."



Next....paint it in your sketchbook using Paynes Gray. Here are the steps:

1. Paint around the whites (i.e., lightest, brightest, whitest part of the image) in the first wash with a light valued gray. "This is the hardest step, because you forget to leave the white areas. It's easy to forget and paint over the whites."
2. Switch to a dark middle value, a 3 or 4 on the value scale, which he provided us with our homework assignment.
3. Then, add the darker middle value followed by the darkest darks.



The subject we sketched and painted in the first session was a Meerkat. Key...to show the white on the Meerkat's head, paint the background. David did use white gouache to paint his whiskers! David assigned us a lot of homework to complete before the next session.

In the second session, David was encouraged by what he saw from our homework and it showed him what we needed to work on. . . the initial drawing and initial stage in the gray study. He said, "if you liked what you did, that's fine, but if you want to improve, learn this skill." In the drawing stage, the problems that needed correcting were: there are lines, not shapes; open ended lines deliver very little information and are extraneous.

David reiterated his magic formula of 'training the dog'. "The tip of the pencil goes in the direction of what I see, not where I think it should go. Draw shapes, not lines. No open ended lines. Contour drawings are not shapes!" Too many lines, seemed to be a big issue! Just draw what you see. For example, in the gorilla image from the homework, you can't see into its mask. So just sketch the shape. Most of us tend not to trust our first line. "Don't go over it!" Suzette asked how to be more accurate the first time. Think about where the line is going, stop & go, make shapes you are in control of. And, remember in the eyes, put in a good reflection.



Using a 2B pencil with a nice point, the next subject to sketch was a Panda. Then we painted it with a Paynes gray. David looked for evenness of the wash. He explained how to run a 'beaded wash' using gravity. We gave it a try and then shared our work. Next David did a few quick demonstrations, sketching a Rhino and a Leopard. The three hours went by quickly and the class

was over. But, David said, “this is not the end. I’m not done with you, yet.” He recommended that we continue to share our work with him; send pics of reference, drawing and initial first light gray wash to rankinworkshops@gmail.com .



Pre Workshop Assignment [[Link to: Handout - Animals - Euclid Art 2022.pdf](#)]
Homework Assignment after 1st session [[Link to: Animal Zoomshop Homework 1.pdf](#)]
David's Basic Light Study Recipes -
Painting the Light [[Link to: Animals . Homework Page.Painting Light.pdf](#)] and
1st Layer Wash of Light Gray. [[Link to: Animals . Homework Pages Reduced.pdf](#)]