

The Upside down drawing: anyone who can write their name and can learn to draw!

Some of you will be able to draw – that is okay please go with this activity. This exercise is designed to demonstrate that anyone with a bit of concentration can learn to draw. We do this through accessing our right brain by 'quietening' the more dominant left brain. Left brain function controls language / analytic process that we use in our everyday lives more readily. Drawing a perceived form or being creative is largely a right brain function. This exercise is taken from 'Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain' by Betty Edwards. The book is fantastic manual on how to see & draw. I want to demonstrate that drawing actually starts with looking & this can be the same for understanding any given situation.

By learning to access the part of your mind that works in a style conducive to creative, intuitive thought, you will learn a fundamental skill of visual arts: how to put down on paper what you see in front of your eyes. Second through learning to draw you will enhance your ability to think more creatively in other areas of your life.

How far you go is up to you; how motivated or curious you might be. But it good to remember that at some point Shakespeare learnt to write prose, John Lennon learnt to play the guitar & Van Gogh learnt to draw. Drawing is a learnable skill.

1. Turn the drawing of the upside down and don't turn it the right way up till you have finished the drawing. (Do not trace the image)
2. Start anywhere you wish but don't try and do the whole outline – draw adjacent to adjacent line and move from space to space – this way you will fit the image together – remember – don't turn it the right way up!
3. If you talk to yourself whilst doing the drawing try to use the language of vision – such as 'this line bends this way' or 'there is a curve there' – try not to 'name' what you are looking at as this can stop you from really looking at & discover its true sense. (so don't say 'this is the tail' – it's a collection of curves. If you 'name' it you are more likely to draw from your memory rather than really see it as it is.
4. At some point the drawing will hopefully become a fascinating puzzle – this means you are 'really drawing' & shifted to 'R' mode and are seeing clearly – this state is easily broken – so please stay focused.
5. Remember that everything you need to complete this drawing is right in front of your eyes.
6. If you find that the image doesn't quite fit don't squeeze the remainder onto the paper (you can always add a bit more).

This exercise can work with almost any photographic image – I do portrait paintings and often use this technique to really investigate the image I'm painting from (especially eyes and mouths).

