

Open Figure Drawing Inc.  
**NEWSLETTER**  
www.openfiguredrawing.com



March, 2012

**Complete info on all our sessions, events, and offerings: [www.openfiguredrawing.com](http://www.openfiguredrawing.com)**

– excerpts from an article by Iver Johnson © 2011 Welcome to Life Drawing

For the informed the studio is a very inviting place, for others there may be hurdles to joining in. We wish to welcome people into the studio, to overcome the common mythology and to foster the understanding of the incentives the studio offers. Perhaps the most common misunderstanding is that the studio is only for artists, it is open to anyone with interest in drawing. Another misconception is that talent is a prerequisite; all abilities from those just starting to draw to professionals are welcomed. Yet another false impression there is no preregistration; the doors are open every Wednesday for drop-ins.

The public perceives studio differently from those who live within its walls. Participants on the open come community studio come for many reasons. Participants are invited to feel personal success, not a perfect drawing, but an experience which is satisfying. That is the power of the studio, feeling empowered by small gains on route to the next image and a higher skill level. It is involvement with life's growth and obtaining a portion of one's potential, one step at a time.

Artwork awes and inspires. Its description and rules constantly change. The beauty which calls people back into the studio time and time again comes from many sources: the models, the poses, the images, and the media. Figure drawing holds a powerful link to our humanity and although the pinnacle of figure drawing may have been reached centuries ago, it is no less an influence on studio goes now. While Life drawing may be slipping from university settings, it has expanded into the community and become more assessable to more people.

**Models offer incentives.** The studio offers many special moments. Life offers too little time to appreciate the observation of people (on screen in movies perhaps but not live). Seeing someone naked without sexual overtones is rare in our culture. Other cultures are much more accepting of nudity as natural. Once participants come to the realization that our reactions are culturally manufactured we can begin to restructure our thinking. Keenly observing a nude can be a delight. I am curious about how people are structured and I find it enlightening to study the human form. When a model drop

**Next Board Meeting**

Tuesday **March 15**  
7 – 9 pm, Jowonio School  
**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**

**Next Special event**

Model / Artist Roundtable  
March 22 Thursday 7-9PM  
Free – open to all with interest

the robe there is little sexuality, instead it

is a call for concentration. While youth and strength are inviting to catalog, more average body types can bring their own beauty.

**Poses offer incentives.** The beauty of the pose may be an unusual concept for those outside of the studio. Participants become connoisseurs not only of forms but of stance. Stance, posture, carriage are uncommon terms describing the action of a model. The appreciation of not just form, but the embodiment of attributes within a pose is common in the studio. The presentation of the human form is an art within itself. Some models become more than reference and become performance artists for a select audience of artists and learners. The halls of museums filled with classical artwork attest to the beauty of the pose. The pose can embody emotion, narrative, or meaning through physical being. Other terms for this are kinesthetic or 'embodied knowledge'.

**Images offer incentives.** The process of creating images is the focus of studio work. Engaging in the process leaves a product, an image. Many people while learning are not satisfied with their imagery but the love of images brings them back to work time and time again. I recall some research on reconstructed visual memory which may bear some impact on the studio experience. Research on photographs of Disneyland shows happy moments, meeting characters and taking thrilling rides - rather than long lines and grumpy, hungry participants. As people reviewed their photographs they focused their memory on the positive photographic scenes rather than unpleasant events. With sketchbooks and the group show catalog do we remember the feeling of creating images rather than the less positive sketches? I wonder if this might color the perception of the studio by recalling studio *experiences* more than just images.

Reviewing images is an important process which contributes to growth. An image is a resource to hone personal likes, leading to a distinctive style. Images help develop 'an eye', a way of examining the subject which reflects an individual's expression. At some point every artist must learn to trust their own judgment aided by their mentors teachings and peers suggestions.

There is a dialog between artist and image that intensely personal - for repeated observation brings new insights. The participant makes decisions based not only on the reference subject, memory, and their original ideas, but also on the burgeoning image- the deliberate as well as the accidental marks that appear on the paper. The dialog comes in observing the growing image and making decisions on what to keep or remove. However marks appear on the paper – by chance, conscious activity, or deeply intuitive action, judgment is made on what is incorporated into the final image. Finding the stopping point is a mystery each person must solve on their own, stop with what is at hand or take a risk of losing for a greater image.

Since the invention of the camera over 100 years ago, figurative artists have had technological competition for production of representational images. But before the camera, the focus of European academies was to train people for representational art. For hundreds of years artists were trained by drawing people. The allure of images

made by hand, using the simplest tools and materials, has not faded. It can be an elemental challenge using basic materials to bring about marks on paper to mimic how the eye sees the human form.

**Media offer incentives.** Materials offer their own enticement. Participants appreciate the sensual quality of applying materials as well as their visual beauty. The feel of materials can be addictive. The developing image offers an adventure and studio participants savor these surprises. I believe most participants do not fully conceive their drawings before making marks. Web designer Steve Klug reflects on human nature, people muddle through – making guesses along the way until they find something that suits them. This concept fits drawing in the studio. Drawing at its core is an adventure and people can be playful, methodical, or free and still find the unexpected.



Ordinary life becomes extraordinary when time is spent life drawing. When you begin to look at the world differently, the world will look different. Small details become special, observation becomes clearer, and visual memory increases. Many studio participants understand this; outsiders may not have an inkling of the benefits. Our wish is to welcome people of all abilities into the open community studio. There they can explore the many dimensions of beauty from the models, the poses, the imagery, and the materials. The open community studio is where creativity does come into action, where dreams are fixed onto paper, and where like spirits soar together. Creative people can collectively grow, provided with opportunities to practice, experiment, and learn together. In the open community studio people interpreting the figure, unlock their creativity and improve their visual literacy. Some will come to quench their curiosity, some will come for the pool of inspiration, and some will come to stretch their wings. Where participants aspire, expect the unexpected, and where the passion for figure drawing is instilled, released, or rejuvenated.

# OFD DRAWING CONFERENCE April 27, 28, 29 8-5:30 Shaffer Art Building SU Main Campus – register online

## **A Sense of Drawing Figure Drawing Workshops**

This conference is designed for all levels of experience. Presentations that cover fundamentals and more advanced topics.

Participants will be able to develop their skills over the course of the day. Topics will be presented in order of difficulty so that the morning will provide a foundation for the afternoon, and Saturday's topics will provide a base for Sunday's presentations.

Register early and check the website for updates. The presenters and schedule are subject to change.

## **Figure Drawing Clinic for High School Students**

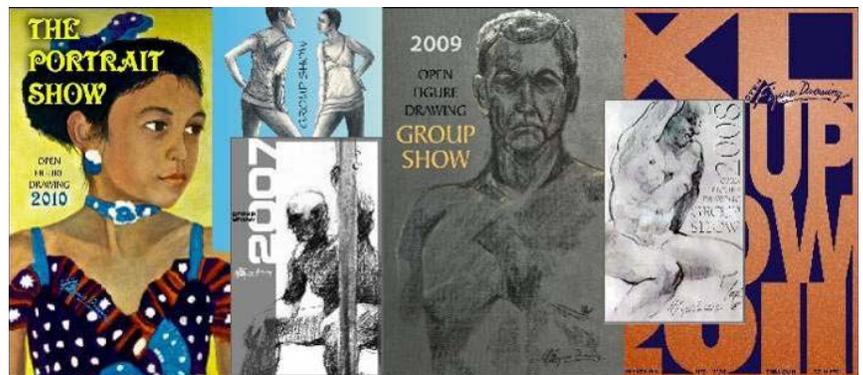
Friday is reserved for High School Students and their teachers only. The day will focus primarily on helping students create pieces for their portfolios by working from life with the best instructors of the area. This is an opportunity not to be missed! Rates are unbelievable affordable--- [www.openfiguredrawing.com](http://www.openfiguredrawing.com).

## **Weather closings**

**It could happen....**

**If SNOW closes Syracuse City Schools, we close too! Check radio and TV for info. (Ha!)**

Catalogs \$10 each or the good deal of 6 for \$30



**UPCOMING TRAVELING SESSIONS –  
We'll be taking figure drawing on the road to new locations- the Everson Museum, Szozda Gallery at the Delevan, Community Folk Art Gallery are all under negotiation for a date! Check the web for finalized details....**

Did you catch the ROMEFIGURE DRAWING EXHIBITION:

You may also be interested in a call for artists for a Figurative Exhibition at the Rome Arts and Community Center. Deadline to submit (in person) was January 23. Visit <http://www.romeart.org> (click on "Events" to view their calendar; a link to the specific event is on January 23) Contact Lauren Getek at [executivedirector@romeart.org](mailto:executivedirector@romeart.org) for more information.