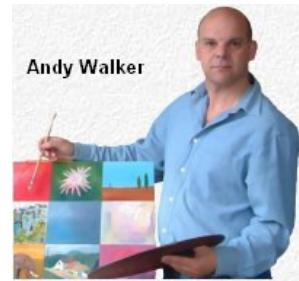


Hints and Tips to improve your drawing and painting.

contour drawing



There are lots of different ways of drawing what we see, but have you ever tried 'contour drawing'? With this technique we are only drawing the contours of an object, so there's no shading involved, or even any attempt to make the object look 3-dimensional and 'real'. The object of the exercise is to draw not only the outline but also any other shapes within the object – the contours. And if possible to do this without taking your pen or pencil off the paper.

There are two steps to contour drawing. The first is to look at your drawing as you go along, as well as at the object. The second stage is to draw without looking at your paper at all.

So what is the point of the exercise? Well, it certainly helps hand to eye co-ordination which will improve your overall drawing ability, and if you get good at it you can make it a party piece that will astound your friends!



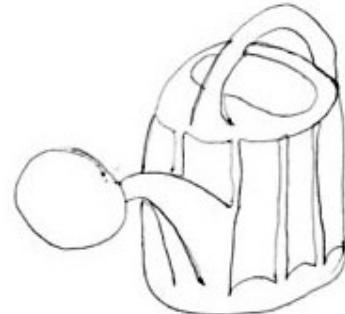
Have a go. Choose an organic object such as a flower or some leaves for your first attempt, as this will help to remove some of the pressure of 'getting it right'. Relax, and begin to draw what you see, following all the outlines and edges. Try to keep your pencil on the paper at all times, even if you have to go back over some of the lines.

You will find that it takes a lot more concentration than you imagine, and you will probably find it much harder than you expected. I suggest you draw on some scrap paper or in an old sketchbook as we are not looking to achieve a finished masterpiece here – it's just a training exercise.

Next, have a go at something a bit more structured. I chose a watering can. Once again keep your pencil on the paper at all times and draw just the contours. Check your drawing as you go along.



Now try drawing *without* looking at your paper. Keep your eyes on the object only. Choose something simple to start off with, such as this jug. Don't expect miracles here, but enjoy the process. I was pleased that most of my lines joined up and touched each other, even though the shape was a bit off.



Then choose a more complicated object to draw, and once again don't be tempted to peek at your drawing as you go along. Wait until you've finished to see what you have done.

You will not have produced a drawing to hang on the wall, but you will have begun to develop more skill in drawing what you see. By regularly doing small quick exercises such as these, you will improve your hand-eye co-ordination.

