

Learn How to Draw Step-by-Step MULTIMEDIA Course

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Lesson 10 How to Draw Flowers

If you think about it, drawing flowers is no different than drawing anything else you've been drawing. There's the One Big Shape, secondary shapes, details, angles, direction, flows, symmetry and ellipses....

All the techniques you've used up to now will be applied to flowers, and I'll explain that shortly. But now, we need a little side trip.

The Philosophy of Drawing

I can't begin to tell you how many students go to an art school and they simply want to begin by painting. They want to grab a brush and swash those rich, vivid paints, and let their wild imaginative *Sensations* just draw them into the exotic tones and colors they see the masters execute.

Flowers *especially* can hypnotize you into that luring place.

Because, as you look at those gorgeous flowers you might really be getting the itch to put down your drawing pencil and go grab a brush.

So why wait!?

Because I can't stress enough the importance of being committed to this course and the step-by-step ways it is intended to nurture you and grow you to into controlling your hand into becoming an expert.

Thus, that leads us to the question why NOT move directly into charcoal and paint?

Here's why—(and flowers are perfect for this discussion)

You are focused right now on all the elements of drawing. Your lines, angles, flows, direction, symmetry and other tools and techniques you are practicing right now are all being applied into a concert of effort. Each time you practice a drawing, you'll (nearly) automatically be going back in your head to the lessons you've learned thus far and applying what you learned in sort of a "rattle" fashion—

An inside conversation might sound like this:

"Hmmm, is that angle the same? Yeah but I need to check the midpoint again. This is definitely higher but that means this other thing will have to be stretched and widened; better check the overall size again just to be sure; ok these over here are definitely elliptical so I'm laying those in using elliptical strokes; oh yeah and leave the behind-lines alone for now; soften, soften not so hard; measure width and height of the biggest object (again); erase these lines 'cause I know they're just plain wrong and are getting in my way, step back and check; now back to comparing these angles...."

By constantly checking and comparing, adjusting, and improving, you will get faster and better at making the drawing look like the picture or arrangement or story you are trying to draw.

But flowers are really a big step forward. Why?

Because although no one will (likely) see the actual flowers you are drawing, you may be inclined to say, well, it's good enough, nobody will really know. And that's true.

But there is another, more important side, to the story.

The Dual Nature of Drawing Flowers

Flowers are both simple and complex.

You know enough now to draw some pretty good flowers—you can draw a rose, a day lily, a mandevilla and hundreds of other flowers—even a vase of flowers, just by using the tools and techniques we've discussed up till now.

But conversely, flowers, too are very much like portraits of people...they are so unique that they can be demanding on even the finest proportions and angles, just because there are so many points to manage simultaneously. Thus, they demand rigorous attention, and the time needed for drawing them is longer. What I mean is, you should invest longer periods of time in drawing flowers. The time spent here will prepare you for more complex elements like animals and people in the next 2 lessons.

And if you are really focused on the "drawing" end of the flowers now, and practice there, when you are ready to pick up your brush and immerse yourself in the rich flavors

of color that flowers excite, you will have confidently locked down the details with your brush because you have already locked down the lines with your pencil.

Then my friend, you will be ready for nuances that tone and color can "blossom" in your future paintings.

Remember, Line...Tone...Color. Always in that order!

So get your lines down now by adhering to the course. Practice, practice, practice. The payback will be worth its weight in gold.

Now that you are willing to stick to your drawing lessons, let's take a closer look at drawing those flowers.

The Wonderment of Flowers

Perhaps you've already figured out that drawing flowers will require that you use all of the steps learned up to this point.

Here's a simple example that has well defined lines:



That, when drawn appears as:



But it should be obvious that the following photo will require much greater patience because there is so much more "personality"—many more lines, ellipses, symmetry and general detail.



And it's exactly this personality that requires precision. So if we were to draw this, although we can "fudge" the proportions, lines, arrangement and so on, and still create a beautiful drawing (and later painting), there's still a hitch with that reasoning.

When you move even further in your drawings and you want to draw a **person's face**, you'll quickly discover that one hair line width in difference in a cheek or chin or eyebrow can make that person look more like his cousin than like him.

That's why paying attention to detail here and now in Drawing is so very important to your skills later on.

Practice, practice, **practice**.

What to look for in flowers.

The basics of the flower that we all recognize in physical form are the petals, leaves, stem, and sometimes stamen, stigma. People have a sense about these and depending on which flower you are drawing and how close you are to what you are drawing.



For example, a close up of an orchid would suggest that you draw the stamen (male with pollen) and stigma (female) parts, but these may not even be noticeable at a distance.

Here's a tip. While trying to draw a flower (or anything else for that matter), if you KNOW what you are seeing, it's easier to draw. What I mean is, if you can't see something clearly, get off your seat and get closer to it (if you can). I don't know how many times I've drawn from a photograph where if I had recognized an object in the background or what someone was holding, or the detail of the thing I was trying to draw, it would have made drawing it SO MUCH easier. So, if you can, get close and study the detail of what you are trying to draw at any point during the drawing until you are sure of the shape.

Flowers all have **character** and **personality**. This takes us back to Lesson 3, Sensing.



The rose, for example, has very soft petals to the sight and touch, and smells delightfully sweet. That's why roses are so often associated with romance.

And the bud atop a strong straight stem gives us the sense of something new and blooming with the foundation of strength.

Of course we transfer those characteristics, quite symbolically and literally, to our loved ones.

Here's the point. Think about using roses in drawings where you want love, romance, innocence, affection, and even sexuality. Then, think of other flowers and what personalities they have (are associated with).

Here's some other examples

Wildflowers are associated with Nature where earthy, outdoor senses are desired.

Exotic flowers like orchids take the senses to distant lands (and mindsets).

Traditional flowers like carnations, daisies, mums and lilies can be used in drawings where, well, appropriate, like weddings, parties, and so on.

Introducing Value (or Tone)

Up 'till now, I've not really mentioned it but you probably have already felt an urge to draw shadows and control light in your drawings. Because this is really a separate course, I've shied away from the discussion because I want to keep you fully focused on your lines, angles, perspective and proportions for now. But...

If you look at the rose that I drew above you will quite clearly see the power of shadows while drawing. And flowers are just soooooo fun to use values because that's how you can so easily add the softness that will reach out to an audience.

Now, it IS possible to draw a sophisticated drawing using nothing more than carefully placed lines and Values. Rembrandt did it brilliantly in his self-portrait "Wide-eyed Rembrandt" below. You'll notice all the shadowing came from the **thickness and number of lines** he used to create his self-portrait.



Summing up.

OK, let's sum up how to draw flowers.

Draw flowers using the tools you have been given already. Start simply with a flower or 2-3 flowers in a vase. Remember:

- The One Big Shape,
- followed by identifying Secondary shapes,
- followed by details.
- Look for any and all angles that you can use to test your relations.
- Use your measuring stick to decide heights vs. widths of shapes.
- Find the horizontal and vertical midpoints
- Triangulate often
- Remember to look to soften lines by breaking them (Fluid lines)
- Apply rules of Symmetry and use of Ellipses wherever you can.

If you are coming along well in your proportions you could try a tall rose in a vase and some smaller objects near the vase base like petals or leaves or a water pitcher, anything that gives a "sense" about what it is you want to draw. If that becomes too difficult, then abandon ship and go for simpler more squarish arrangements and keep practicing there. Everyone learns at their own good speed, but do push yourself within reason.

Did I mention that you should practice often? ☺

[Here's the video.](#)

And if you want to download the pdf document of the Oriental Lilies that I drew for YOU to draw, you can [get it here](#).

I'll be drawing Oriental Lilies from an arrangement for you. Notice how I decide to take a portion of the arrangement and pick only the lines that are most important.

You'll get a sense of this yourself every time you draw, so don't focus on that as a left-brain exercise (you're artistic right-brain will get it right for you if you just keep Sensing).

That's it for now. I'll be in touch!

Paul