RLP-STUDIOA · RLP Advanced Studio Art A — Observation, Abstraction and Transformation

Unit 1: Seeing Like an Artist: Observation, Design and the Critic's Eye

Practice Workbook. The same problems, in the same order, as the Practice sections of the online lessons.

Name _____ Period _____

Lesson 1.1 — How Artists Think on Paper: Sketchbooks and Studies

FLUENCY

1. Name the three purposes of a sketchbook the lesson draws from Hokusai, Seurat and Caillebotte, and match each to its artist.

2. Define *preparatory study* and *annotation*, and explain why the lesson says a margin note can be worth more than a polished drawing.

3. Describe the two ways the lesson gives for starting a page with no preconceived plan.

APPLICATION

4. In *Paris Street; Rainy Day* the green lamppost divides the picture almost exactly in two. Explain why the lesson calls this "a decision, not an accident," and what kind of sketchbook use would test it.

5. Bingham's figure sheets and Hokusai's manga both collect forms. How do they collect differently, according to the lesson?

6. A student's sketchbook page shows a careful drawing of a shoe with no writing on it. Write a two-sentence annotation that would make the page useful, using the lesson's method.

7. The Bingham drawings were kept together in 1974. Summarize how, and explain what "held in trust for the People of Missouri" means for where you can see them.

CHALLENGE

8. John Ruskin argued that drawing trains you to see what is actually in front of you rather than what you assume is there. Explain how a blind contour drawing serves that aim even though it rarely looks good.

REVIEW

9. Prerequisite review: what is a *silhouette*, and why does the lesson say Seurat's study of a seated woman tested one?

Lesson 1.2 — Value, Edge and the Focal Point

FLUENCY

1. Put the six zones of light on a rounded form in order from the light side to the table: cast shadow, halftone, highlight, reflected light, light, core shadow.

2. Define hard, soft and lost edges.

3. On the nine-step scale, which step is paper white and which is the darkest mark? Which steps do most unplanned student drawings use?

APPLICATION

4. The lab kit gives target brightness for the nine steps (step 1 = 100 percent of paper white, step 5 = 50, step 9 = 0). How far apart are the steps, and what brightness spread does a drawing that uses only steps 3 to 6 have?

5. A student draws the reflected light on an apple's shadow side at step 4. The halftone on the lit side is at step 5. What is wrong, and how should it be fixed?

6. In the lesson's still life (white mug, crumpled bag, dark apple on gray cloth, light from the upper left), the apple is the focal point. List three decisions that make the apple dominate and two that subordinate the bag.

7. You make a lost-edge study: two shapes are both at step 5, so the boundary vanishes. How can you make the edge reappear at one corner only, and what does that show about how little contrast the eye needs?

REVIEW

8. Review (Lesson 1.1): which sketchbook purpose (collecting, testing or planning) do the lab's five playing-card-sized thumbnails serve, and why?

Lesson 1.3 — Four Moves of Criticism: Ranking Without a Canon

FLUENCY

1. Name the four steps of art criticism in order and state the question each answers.

2. Name the four families of criteria and what each values.

3. Label each sentence as description, analysis, interpretation or judgment: (a) "The tile is an eight-pointed star with a cream glaze." (b) "The symmetry of the garment draws the eye to the central face." (c) "The wave stands for the power of nature over people." (d) "By formal criteria the garment is the strongest of the four."

APPLICATION

4. Use the dossier's scoring method. Your weights: formal 3, expressive 3, functional 2, imitational 2 (they add to 10). You score the Chilkat garment formal 4, expressive 3, functional 4, imitational 1. What is its total out of 40?

5. Critic A weights imitational 4, formal 2, expressive 2, functional 2 and ranks Caillebotte first and the Chilkat garment last. State the strongest objection to this ranking.

6. Write one interpretation sentence about Hokusai's *The Great Wave* that is a claim supported by visual evidence, not only a feeling.

7. Explain why the lesson calls changing your ranking after reading the counter-rankings "a strength in criticism, not a loss."

CHALLENGE

8. Show how a change of weights alone can reverse a ranking. Work X scores imitational 4, formal 2; work Y scores imitational 1, formal 4 (other families equal). Compare totals with weights (imitational 4, formal 1) and then (imitational 1, formal 4), counting only these two families.

REVIEW

9. Review (Lesson 1.2): in an analysis of *Paris Street; Rainy Day*, which two tools from the value-and-edge lab would you look for to explain where the eye goes first?

Lesson 1.4 — One Thing Matters Most: An Expressive Composition

FLUENCY

1. What is a *brief*, and what makes one usable for an expressive composition?

2. List five tools of dominance the lesson names besides value contrast and edge.

3. How does viewpoint change a composition? Give the lesson's effect of a high viewpoint and of a low one.

APPLICATION

4. The final drawing is 12 x 18 inches (portrait). Where do the thirds lines fall, and what are the four crossing points (in inches from the top-left corner)?

5. Thumbnails are drawn in a 2 x 3 inch frame and the final is 12 x 18. Why does that proportion matter, and what is the enlargement factor?

6. In the worked plan for the phone-charger brief, the value areas are cable 6 percent, blanket 40, books and cup 20, pillow 12, wall and floor ?. Find the missing share and explain the one test the plan must pass at the squint stage.

7. Write a one-sentence brief of your own (a question, not a subject) for a still life, and describe in two sentences how you would stage and light it so one element dominates.

REVIEW

8. Review (Lesson 1.3): your older brother looks at your work in progress and says it is "about dependence and late nights." Which step of criticism is he doing, and why is it useful to hear it before you explain anything?

Unit 1 checkpoint

1. Which sketchbook purpose does Hokusai's manga best illustrate?
   A. Testing one question
   B. Collecting forms from the world for later use
   C. Planning a single painting's perspective
   D. Copying another artist's finished work
2. True or false: A blind contour is drawn while looking only at the paper, so the lines stay neat.
3. The darkest band on the object itself, just past where the form turns from the light, is the _____ shadow.
4. Where should reflected light sit on the nine-step scale if the lit side's darkest value is step 5?
   A. Step 2
   B. Step 4
   C. Step 6 or 7
   D. Step 9
5. True or false: An edge is lost when the two shapes meeting there have the same value.
6. Which sentence is a judgment that names its criteria?
   A. The garment has a black border around a yellow field.
   B. The symmetry leads the eye to the central face.
   C. By functional criteria the garment succeeds, because it was made for ceremonial dancing.
   D. The garment is beautiful.

7. Criteria that value how well a work serves its purpose, such as a ceremony or a building, are called _____ criteria.

8. With weights formal 4, expressive 3, imitational 1, functional 2, a work scores 3, 3, 4, 2. What is its total?
   A. 28
   B. 29
   C. 31
   D. 32

9. A thumbnail is 2 x 3 inches and the final is 12 x 18. How many times larger is each side of the final?
   A. 3
   B. 4
   C. 6
   D. 9

10. In Bingham's Jolly Flatboatmen in Port, which tool of dominance leads the eye to the dancer?
    A. A lost edge around the dancer
    B. An overall pyramid shape with the dancer at the top
    C. Placing the dancer in the exact center of a blank sky
    D. Leaving the dancer unfinished

11. True or false: Arthur Wesley Dow teaches that a strong arrangement can be tested in a small dark-light sketch before any detail is added.