

The Dutch School

Drawing & Painting Lessons

And the Secrets of the Old Masters

Jennie Smallenbroek

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by Jennie Smallenbroek

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RIGHT: AFTER EXAMPLE FROM
“THE LADY DEFENDING HERSELF AGAINST LOVE” BY WILLIAM BOUGUEREAU,
OIL ON LINEN 70x50 CM.



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FOREWORD

With knocking knees, I walked into the studio of Jennie Smallenbroek in 2013 for my first painting lesson. Scratching up after a heavy burnout, I was emotionally, cognitively and energetically out of balance. As part of ‘practice what you preach’, I thought it would be good to do what I recommend to my clients: do something that makes you feel like you forget the time so the world around you feels life flowing through you. Call it your “flow”. It can be in anything. From knitting socks to conscious breathing, search for what works for you. If it gets you in the ‘flow’, it is good.

In a period when it was too much even to sign for a package receipt, I decided to paint. Although I hadn’t drawn since childhood, the feeling it gave me remained. But how scary it was to pick it up again ... to walk into that studio. Could I still do it? What will the others think? What on earth did I start with?

Luckily, I chose Jennie’s studio. Jennie not only offers a disarming welcome to the (budding) artist but also pays attention to the person behind it. Of course, she knows to master the techniques to perfection, but what strikes me is how she allows you the space to be yourself and grow because that happens when you get creative. Seen through my professional eyes as a neuropsychologist, I know the unique effect that challenges your brain when you start drawing. Not so strange.

The cooperation of the brain areas demands a lot from your brain, and if you repeat this, you create connections at the cellular level so that your brain (and, therefore, you) will generally function more smoothly and more balanced. This benefits all brain functions, and there are quite a few, from emotional well-being to vital functions such as heart rate and breathing. You can be born with a talent for drawing, but you don’t have to. As with sports, it requires practice to develop skills.

You now have this book and are busy or plan to become more skilled in the visual arts. If you are lucky, you have already experienced the visual arts, bringing you into your “flow”. I would say cherish your gift, take from this book by Jennie about what you can use, and ensure you occasionally “exhaust” your brain on the line you draw with your pencil or brush. In any case, it has brought me back to a state of balance, knowing what makes me happy and what suits me. I stand upright again, and with my private practice, I have combined my profession with the visual arts, a combination that suits me perfectly.

Thanks, Jennie.

Jolanda Snel (Neuro) psychologist

LEFT: THE EXODUS: JOCHEBED & AARON – 2017
OIL ON LINEN 200x120 CM



PREFACE

This book is divided into three parts.

Part 1: Personal development;

Part 2: Drawing lessons, and

Part 3: Painting lessons.

Instead of chapters, each topic is treated separately in lessons. After reading and actively engaging in all the lessons from this book, you will gain more knowledge of drawing and painting, just as the old masters did. You will learn about carriers, brush choice and pigments, colour mixing, composition and perspective and the advantages and disadvantages of using specific materials.

I gained the knowledge described in this book through thirty years of study and research, experimenting and practising for many hours. This knowledge is, therefore, not new; on the contrary. Much knowledge comes from the “Dutch Old Masters” such as Rubens, Rembrandt and Vermeer, and many others.

This book is intended as a practical tool for hobby painters and professional artists, visual arts teachers, and shop employees selling artist supplies. I have tried to write this book to be used in secondary schools, art schools or as self-study material. In addition, I hope that this book can contribute to preserving the knowledge of classical drawing and painting.

Painting involves more than brushing your paint and applying it to the canvas. The personal development journey that is going on inside of you whilst you are learning how to draw and paint is something that you have to consider because you will find yourself when you are learning to draw or paint. That is why, in the book’s first part, I paid attention to the psychological effects and spirituality; what can you experience when you start painting?

In earlier times, the churches mainly commissioned the painting. At that time, artists learned from their teachers in their studios. Many students continued to work in their master’s studio because they provided the assignments. When fewer orders came from the churches, artists began focusing on wealthy citizens who wanted immortalised. Over time, these commissions also became scarcer, and artists began to focus on painting still life and landscapes.

Today, art is practised not only by professional artists but also by hobbyists. In the Netherlands, well over one million people will be drawing and painting in 2020. Within welfare work, currents have emerged in which creativity is used to help people come into contact with themselves, to express themselves better or is used as trauma processing. Nowadays, painting and drawing are seen as wellness activity that relaxes, such as practising yoga or meditating, because they quickly put you in a meditative state in which time no longer plays a role.

LEFT: GYRFALCON – 2016
OIL ON WOOD

In the 20th century, art schools taught less and less classical drawing and painting methods. In the 21st century, it's much more about developing a concept. It often happened that disappointed graduate artists walked into my studio who wanted to learn more about realistic drawing and painting techniques and the methods of the old masters. I realised there was a need to know more about perspective, composition, colour mixing, which brushes with different hairstyles to create a particular effect, the other drying times of colours and the chemical impact of the various mediums together with the pigments and carriers. I will go into all these subjects in detail in this book.

As soon as one understands "art" – mastering the basic knowledge and skills of drawing and painting techniques – it's time to develop further in style, authenticity, and working out concepts. It is always about building a foundation, which is essential in life. When building a house, you start with the foundation, not the roof.

A century and a half ago, no photo camera existed. Before that, everything was drawn and painted. In the 19th century, the photo camera took over a lot of work from the painter.

Nevertheless, artists were still looked up to because they could do something extraordinary that not everyone could do.

Many people say they cannot draw. I shall repeat myself again and again that everyone can learn to draw and paint because you can learn to use and develop the right hemisphere. Just as you learn to write, you can also learn to draw and paint if you are provided with the correct methods by a teacher who has followed this path, who has practised the classical drawing and painting techniques for years and who is capable of remembering to experience what it is like to learn with errors and develop the perseverance to proceed with determination.

If you compare a photo with a painting copied from an image, you will see that the picture has more depth and radiates an energy that is not felt in a photo. That's what the artist has put in and what you will hardly feel in a picture. It also brings more atmosphere to your home if you hang a painting because more energy is emitted from a painting than a photo.

In addition, much more important reasons are discussed in the first part of this book why it is demonstrable that making art adds more to people's mental well-being so that it can no longer be ignored that making art is an integral part of human development in all age categories.

With my paintings distributed throughout the book to illustrate the lessons, I wish that people experience the peace, freedom, and love I felt when I painted them. I hope these feelings' essence will light up through the paint and touch people's hearts.

As an artist, I feel called to do my work and pass on the knowledge and wisdom developed throughout the years. By giving this to you, I wish you to discover the joy and inner peace while learning these skills and expanding your authenticity.

“Creativity is only discussed when you have mastered the basic skills.”

Jennie Smallenbroek

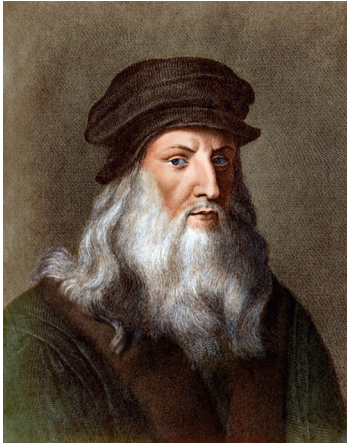
PART 1

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



LESSON 1

OBSERVATION



“ALL OF OUR KNOWLEDGE STEMS FROM OUR OBSERVATION.”

LEONARDO DA VINCI - ITALIAN SCIENTIST, ARTIST AND INVENTOR

This lesson is the most important of all the lessons in this book. Painting mainly has to do with observing by consciously observing – looking, your consciousness changes because you start looking at everything around you differently than before. Shape and colour, how the light falls on something and how shadows change the shapes and colours. As your perception develops, your sensitivity to everything around you becomes sharper.

WHAT IS PERCEPTION?

If we place two people opposite each other and in between them an object, such as an open book, one person will see the cover and the other the letters, so they both see something different. When you ask them the question: What do you see, what do you observe? Then the answer from social programming is, “I see a book”, and the other person may say, “I see the inside of a book”. You name what you think you see. We call this labelling.

The one who perceives is you. When you practice looking or staring at things and describing only the form or colours, you begin to see what you observe by looking at it more consciously without just putting a label on it. You will now describe the object as: “I see a rectangular object with black marks,” The other might say, “I see a rectangular object with colours and black or coloured marks.” Then you observe without putting a label on it, and you will look more at the shape and colour than the subject. This will start to open your mind to perceiving things more in detail.

We call this way of looking at clear perception one of the three exercises that help a person to calm the stream of thoughts. By looking this way, you may also start looking differently at nature. You might experience it more intensively, and what comes along with this is that you will begin to experience gratitude for everything around you. Out of a sense of gratitude, feelings of love and happiness arise.

STILL LIFE WITH LACE CLOTH – 2017
OIL ON LINEN