

The Dutch School

PORTRAIT

Drawing & Painting Lessons

And the Secret of the Old Masters

Jennie Smallenbroek

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De Hollandse School – Portret teken- & schilderlessen

En het geheim van de oude meesters

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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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RIGHT: AFTER EXAMPLE FROM GABRIËLLE COT BY BOUGUEREAU - 2016
OIL ON LINEN, 45x40 CM





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



**“THE TRUE DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY IS NOT A QUEST FOR NEW
LANDSCAPES, BUT OBSERVATION WITH NEW EYES.”**

Marcel Proust - French writer and critic 1871-1922

EXERCISE LESSON 1:

Take an object and describe what you see; the shape, colours, light, and shadows.

It seems like a simple exercise. But if you do this exercise seriously, you will experience a change in your perception. You will see everything more consciously in your daily life.

What you observe is true for you. When people see things from a different perspective, it is their truth. Because we perceive all differently, we all have different truths and can use each other to get the bigger picture. What does the other see that you don't see? This is mainly because someone has already developed their senses and can look over to the other side, standing in the other footsteps.

People have different inclinations. When one person feels more with the skin, the other may feel sensations with colour or is more auditory and hears specific vibrations. What you experience is your truth; we can't say there is only one truth. What you perceive will teach you, too, by using this observation and perception in your creative expression. We must learn to trust our experiences. The only thing we have to unlearn is the labels we have already put on it because that blocks our inner self. With this exercise, you learn, as it were, to look innocently into the world as a child and to experience what you see.

We see in society, especially in certain cultures and religions, that people try to convince each other of their truth. Suppose all of humanity learns to listen to and accept and respect the insights and experiences of others. In that case, the world will improve because relationships will have this fundament of respect, and humanity will experience more peace.

This also applies to you personally. Suppose you learn and accept that other people experience things differently and their truth is different. In that case, you will also experience more peace because you no longer judge but start listening by being silent and observing Solidarity.

Because of this, we will be grateful for the presence of all people; every single person becomes vital because, through this cooperation, we can also grow internally and experience unity.



“OBSERVING NATURE HAS PRODUCED ART.”

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO - ROMAN STATESMAN
AND WRITER 106 B.C. - 43 B.C.

DISCUSS WORK TO SHARE YOUR OBSERVATION

At the end of the painting lesson, we do a “round” in my studio, discussing everyone’s work. It is essential to participate in these discussions actively. Because of the value of everyone’s perception in the group, it is necessary to share observations, which we call “critique” in art. The terms beautiful or ugly are also judgments and can block the mind and perception of yourself and the openness of others. What we wish to see and hear is what you experience, what you feel and want to say about the paintings of others. This is an opportunity to develop your perception. It is hard to let go of the image when you are focused.

Attention to each other’s work is essential to learning to paint. It is human to continue painting when it is time to stop and pay attention to what others made. Force yourself to stop. Allow yourself to share and receive what others want to share with you. You will learn a lot from looking at the work of others and hearing the critique of your study mates.

Your development as a beginner

As mentioned, you will start looking differently at your environment during the first year. For example, during a birthday, you may look more at noses, eyes, skin colour, or paintings hanging on the wall. While hiking, you will notice that you intensely enjoy all shades of green trees and shrubs. You will look at the clouds in another way. You start looking at the colours and the shapes, and the perspective.

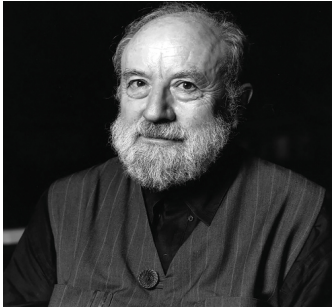
WHY DO YOU START WITH THE SUBJECT OBSERVATION?

The more you become aware of your environment, by forgetting the labels you put on it, the more you start looking; your life will be enriched in all areas. You will experience everything more intensively. The result becomes visible not only in your paintings but also in your relationships with people, animals, and things around you.



LESSON 2

KNOW YOURSELF



**"BRINGING BACK THE CHILD WHO SLEEPS DEEP WITHIN US
UNDER A THICK LAYER OF FRUSTRATION AND NEGLECT
REQUIRES MUCH ATTENTION AND REST."**

MICHEL BUTOR - FRENCH WRITER – 1921

OVERCOME FRUSTRATIONS

When you start painting, you find yourself in several ways. While one person is a perfectionist and never satisfied, the other is restless and wants to see quick results. This indicates that someone does not accept who one is and is fighting against their natural inclinations. You can see this too, for example, if someone with curls wants straight hair, and the person with straight hair wants curls, or someone without hair wants hair. This happens the same way while learning to paint. The perfectionist wants to loosen up; the impatient person constantly gets in his way because it takes too long for a painting to be ready. And so, frustration arises if people resist those feelings and don't accept their deepest inclinations. There are, of course, countless examples to mention.

The most self-criticism I've heard when people start painting is that they don't have patience. What you can do to overcome these frustrations is to accept the way you are. When you realise that these moments are there to learn from or that these are moments to break through, the frustrations also disappear. Doing the exercise below, as soon as you get frustrated, you will find that you have calmed down and can continue painting.

EXERCISE LESSON 2: OVERCOME FRUSTRATIONS

The next question will be, "How does that work?" or "How do you do that?" You can do this as follows:

- By letting the feelings that arise in you happen;
- To be aware of it by feeling it consciously without fighting it. Then release it by taking three deep breaths through your nose and exhaling through your mouth, telling yourself that you are good as you are.

*Left: Marschall Vian Summers - 2018
Oil on wood*

After a year of practice, a student often says, “Gosh, I let go of that. It should be precisely what I want; I am alright with making mistakes.” And then they paint a perfect piece of work as if they have never done otherwise.

YOU CAN MAKE MISTAKES

Criticising yourself can give you the feeling or bring up the conviction that you are not good enough and should not make mistakes. We’ve all had the experience of being graded at a young age. A high mark means “good”, and a lower mark means you have not performed sufficiently. It has been instilled from an early age that you should not make mistakes, and if you did not do it right, you would be punished or skip a class. In the working environment, in many companies, this is still the case; if you make mistakes, you will be called out or, at worst, fired. For many, the fear of making mistakes and rejection come from here. These feelings can also arise from education. Parents often raise their children how they were raised. That blueprint created at a young age cannot be extracted at a later age, however much you would like to. We must therefore face this aspect of ourselves and become aware of where that fear of failure has arisen, which in turn causes the sense of wanting to do everything perfectly. My experience has shown that if you’re going to learn something, you must make mistakes. Otherwise, what needs improvement or what you should pay extra attention to is unclear. We only learn from our mistakes. We do not learn from the things we are already doing well.

RECEIVING CRITIQUE

The experience described above makes it difficult for many people to receive and give critiques. Learning to regard critique as constructive and then using it as a learning tool and doing something with it is already a process. Learning to accept constructive criticism when hearing critique comments during the painting lesson is a good experience before exhibiting. At exhibitions, visitors often express themselves critically about your work. If you have correctly understood the lesson about perception, you will find that you process hearing constructive criticism differently than you used to. You are going to accept that others experience things differently. This allows you to receive the critique better, and you become grateful that they want to share it with you because you can learn from their insights and no longer have to fear rejection. What a relief!



“THE BEST WAY TO LEARN SOMETHING IS TO TEACH IT.”

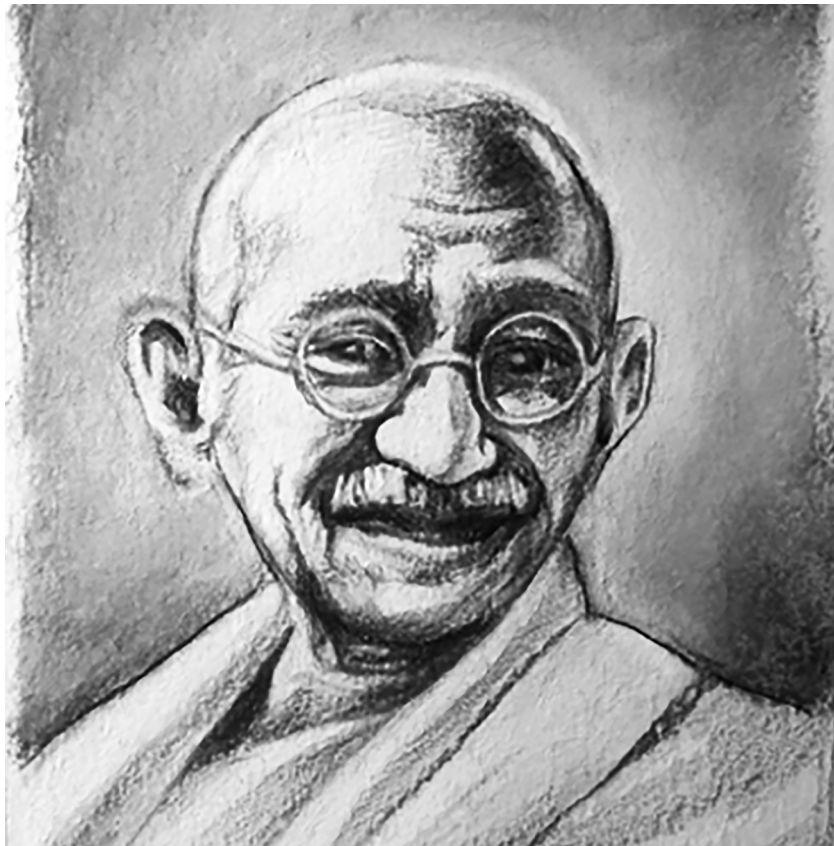
SENECA - ROMAN PHILOSOPHER, STATESMAN AND PLAYWRIGHT 5 B.C. -
A.D. 65

LEARNING TO LEARN

If you are keen to learn something, it is essential to stay open-minded to learn. With such an attitude, which arises from the idea that you already know it all, you create a great distance between you and your teacher because you are closed-minded. Once you are convinced you already know everything, you block the learning moments and are no longer open to change and improvement. The result puts a great space between you and your fellow students because your attitude says you are further than they are.

Your ability to learn and remain open-minded allows you to inspire yourself, a quality of great artists. Even when artists were the great masters in the guild, they still apprenticed to colleagues or copied their work to learn new techniques to develop their skills. You are never finished with your personal development, and you are never finished with your development as a painter. We, humans, continue learning throughout our lives, and as an artist, you continue to learn by looking at every new painting as a practice.

When someone receives critique and reacts like: “Yes, but it is not finished yet”, or whatever response indicates that the critic is rejected, it suggests that someone has difficulty receiving critique and, therefore, has a problem being taught. This attitude often stems from fear of rejection or of making mistakes and the fear of punishment. If you are troubled by this, you can also do the overcoming frustrations exercise described in this lesson.



MAHATMA GANDHI - 2016
CHARCOAL WITH WHITE CHALK



LESSON 3

INSPIRATION



“GENIE IS ONE PER CENT INSPIRATION AND NINETY-NINE PER CENT PERSPIRATION”.

THOMAS ALVA EDISON, AMERICAN INVENTOR AND FOUNDER OF GENERAL ELECTRIC 1847 - 1931

WHERE DOES INSPIRATION COME FROM?

When people are creative, they do so from a certain sense of inspiration caused by a thought that gives the energy where you feel the need to express this feeling, as musicians, artists, poets, and writers do. You can create something beautiful with inspiration if you have had enough basic knowledge and practice in the area where you want to express yourself.

As much as artists sometimes endeavour to make it appear that their work was created in a moment of enthusiasm, it is often shown that in addition to inspiration, many years and hours of hard work and diligence have been the basis before they started. Inspiration is an inner force that guides them and can create what they receive in their mind's eye.

BUT WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

The different dictionaries say the following:

- Translated from Latin: Spiritus = spirit.
- In-spirit = Being in the spirit.
- Aspirating air into the lungs;
- A divine inspiration (Latin: inspiratio);
- Having ideas;
- A creative thought of how to do something or get a job done;
- A state in which you think creatively and know how to do something right;
- The literal meaning is insufflation. A state of consciousness or “inspiration” in which the artist has the maximum creative ability and effortlessly finds the design most suitable for the intended artwork.

LEFT: OLD LADY WITH PIPE - 2018. O
IL ON WOOD, 70x50 CM

WHAT DOES INSPIRATION DO?

Inspiration gives the immediate need to express yourself musically or artistically while simultaneously providing the need to develop craft skills and skills to fulfil that need.

When an artist, writer, poet, composer or performing musician is inspired, the above two elements are expressed, either in the production of a composition or a series of sketches for a work or in a performance. Inspiration is drawn from both external and internal factors. Inspiration, for example, can also be nourished by a deeply felt inner spiritual awareness.

WHY IS INSPIRATION SO IMPORTANT?

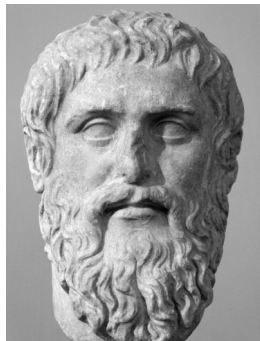
Inspiration is essential because it derives from your source. The feeling of being inspired comes from your deepest inclinations and desires. Inspiration guides you in a process where you are closest to yourself, and it feels good. You connect with a higher frequency and bring your thinking and, thereby, your whole energy to a higher level. You get closer to your “Self”; to the unity of the Universe and God.

By feeling inspired, you feel alive, radiate vitality, and enjoy all the people, animals and things around you more. Your body heals faster when it needs to recover. Everyone around you will benefit if you feel good because you radiate that higher energy, a beautiful light. The result of what you paint is, therefore, no longer necessary. It’s about the process of going there.

DISTRACTION

Inspiration can be disturbed by distraction. Distraction can take many forms. For example, a musician inspired to play can suddenly lose the thread, become flattened, or lose concentration. This can be due to both internal and external factors. He can suddenly think of something else; the mind wanders, whether someone in the hall has to cough or when thoughts are popping up about paying the bills. Another cause is that it is too cold or warm in the studio. Or that it is such a mess that the thoughts keep going to, “I actually have to tidy up and clean the house”, or “I still have to do some shopping”, or “I still have to answer my emails”. When the phone rings, you are distracted, and you are out of concentration and, as a result, disrupt the flow of inspiration. Lacking motivation, a composer can come to a “dead end” and no longer know how to compose. This is also the case with artists.

If you have to do administration, you are busy with numbers and your left brain is involved. As a result, you can no longer find enough inspiration to start painting because the right brain is involved with creative processes.



“WHOEVER GOES BEYOND THE MADNESS OF THE MUSES TO THE GATES OF POETRY WITH THE BELIEF THAT HE WILL BE A GREAT POET BASED ON HIS ART SKILLS, HE REMAINS UNCONSECRATED, AND HIS WORK, THE WORK OF THE DELIBERATE ONE, IS INFLUENCED BY THE OEUVRE OF MADMEN IN THE DARK.”

PLATO - GREEK PHILOSOPHER 427 B.C. - 347 B.C.

AVOIDING DISTRACTIONS

What can you do to avoid distractions? Turn off your phone, and ensure you have a fixed day of the week and set times for painting. But..., inspiration cannot always be forced to a specific day or time, and therefore you will have to find a way to let go and put it aside to let your creativity run wild. If you suddenly get inspiration, there is only one option: turn off your phone, lock your door and hang a note on it “Do not disturb me because I am working”. When you are in the flow of inspiration, you forget time. You fail to eat and drink until your body starts to protest. So make sure you always have a bottle of water next to you and a few sandwiches, apples or bananas up for grabs.

FINDING YOUR MUZE (= INSPIRATION)

In Ancient Greece, inspiration was attributed to a God or the muses, and invoking or referring to the muses as a source of inspiration has since become a cliché. Every so often, the loved one takes the place of the poet. I have translated this example into the sentences: what makes you happy? What inspires you?

In the 20th century, under Freud’s influence, the view arose that inspiration arises from the subconscious. But I have the experience that you can influence the subconscious mind through conscious thoughts and actions.

Everything you have already thought and written down is out of your mind, and you will not think about it any more. New thoughts and ideas can arise if your mind is free from everyday things. By doing the exercises described in this lesson, such as writing down all your reviews, your subconscious beliefs are made aware.

These exercises are good for you if you are blocked and have no inspiration, but also to find out exactly what inspires you, after which you can start working deliberately and actively creating something new.

EXERCISE LESSON 3:

Here are some steps you can take to help you figure out what makes you happy or what inspires you:

- Cut images you like from magazines every day for a month;
- Keep poems that touch you. After a month, investigate what hits you by selecting the pictures by colour or subject. Does the subject matter more to you, or is it the colour? When it comes to poems: what is the subject of the lyrics? Where in your body do you feel the emotions or the energy when you read them?
- Plan a few hours each week to go out, but don’t take anyone with you, as this will distract you from your goal of finding inspiration. This is your outing, your muse day. Do whatever you like, go into the woods, take a walk or go shopping and buy all kinds of creative crafts or a new sketchbook or notebook, or go to a museum or exhibition or a concert;
- Get up half an hour earlier and write two pages every morning in a notebook about everything

that comes to mind. Don't let anyone else read it. Don't tell anyone what you wrote down. Forget your spelling mistakes because that distracts you enormously;

- Make a list of what your wishes are in life. See which desire is easiest to realise, act to do this and check them off if you have done them;
- Make an action list every week. List what you want to achieve or must do in the coming week;
- Then make a daily list with what you wish to do or achieve with the weekly action list as a guideline and cross off when you have done them.

By doing these exercises, you will notice that several things are happening to you, namely:

- You will discover new things about yourself;
- You will find that certain beliefs you previously held are wrong;
- You will get new thoughts and ideas that inspire you;
- Especially the writing process in the morning ensures that you get space in your thinking, which gives you peace of mind;
- You also find out what is on your mind unconsciously;
- You will start to process things and give them a new place because you will write them off.

The action lists ensure that you get space in your thinking because once you have checked the actions, you can take them off, and you do not have to think about them any longer.

Taking painting lessons is good for developing your painting technique and gaining new inspiration because seeing what others create can give you tremendous inspiration.

*Right: Old is beautiful - man with beard- 2014
Charcoal with white chalk on paper*

