

OBL Brief and Worksheet: TITLE- FINDING YOURSELVES AMID THE STUDIO TO THE CITY



R-B-Kitaj Bed- 2000-2002



Marc Chagall Drawing



Rose Wiley, Study for Cautionary Tales

STEP 1- LOOK CLOSELY:

(4 minutes): Briefly look at one contemporary and/or historical painting reference that engages you. *There are a diverse range of perspectives as each artist engages connecting with the world around them through observational drawing.* Answer a question:

- **The Artist has made a drawing of their environment and something they saw of the objects around them. What do you notice about it?**
- **What do you notice about the construction- how the artist has made connections to the objects within the environment?**
- **What you notice about the perspectives and how the figures/objects and spaces are arranged?**
- **How might the artist connect aspects of themselves to the world they are drawing?**
- **How might the artist have introduced marks that act as descriptive symbols or forms?**

Share with the person next to you if you wish.

STEP 2- CONTEXT:

As you register where you are right now, and your relation in this city classroom of distinct history and identity, to the expansive flow of life outside of our current bubble towards the city beyond; your task here is to try and be present, to find ourselves in a busy space where everything is in flux and is no longer measurable. As Maurice Merleau Ponty puts it '*The world is not in front of us, it is all around us*'.

You will follow your objects through your sightline, making a connection between yourselves, the studio and the city. Your eye may land on any ordinary/ unconventional focuses, near or far, self or other, up high or down low. Interpret what you are looking at and make an individual connection and response through drawing. *You may also* add, respond to or to inspire reflections of your actions within the groups emerging drawing.

Think about Speed. Baudelaire tells of Delacroix, out with his students, pointing up at a high building 'if you haven't sufficient skill to make a sketch of that man throwing himself out of that window in the time it takes for him to fall from the fourth floor to the ground, you will never be capable of producing grandes machines. Implicit is the idea that we must learn to make an intuitive mark, a sign – marks made at speed that becomes not just descriptive, but form an autonomous language, compressing complex content.

You may even allow your internal thoughts or fantasy to be nourished by the narrations around you, or by a reciprocal exchange or response to the work in front of you. Redon once said 'putting the visible at the service of the invisible'.

Place it all together. We will start to renew a personal and collective sense of space – of navigating together in the world right now.

STEP 3 ACTIVITY: (10 minutes): To use the objects of 'Yourselves, the Studio and the City' to follow your sightline as subjects for a fast collaborative drawing; You are invited to become an improvisational, active and immersive participant in the room.

MATERIALS: *Try to work fast paced with charcoal. You may choose to work with sticks, sponges or collage, tracing paper, masking tape, scissors to advance your application of tools should you wish. You may examine methods through; contrast, depth, surface, representational or non- representational drawing, it does not matter, the result will be a sum of its parts.*

- 1. Start to notice what you observe around you as you take in your surroundings, what does your eye get caught by when you let it. Follow your looking, what does that look like?**
 - a. Think about the journey – *for example as you follow from your knees to your shoes, to your neighbour, to their shoes, to the window, to day dreaming across the city, back to the pencils or images on the table.*
 - b. *Don't spend too much time searching before you begin to draw, or start responding to each other's drawings.*
 - c. *Try to stand, and walk around the room gathering information rather than sitting down, (if you can't please don't worry). It is about becoming more of an active and immersive participant.*
- 2. Make a drawing. A good starting point might be to register where you are;**
 - a. Allow your eye to be pulled back and forth, to travel from the far distance and back to your own hand as it draws.
 - b. Seize diagonals in what you can see, let them fan out in front of you like a spider spinning a web. You may have to move around one another!
 - c. Don't be intimidated by perspective; draw intuitively, take shapes, angles as your starting point?
 - d. Allow your wrist movements to extend to the arm in order to get more expansive forms down.
- 3. Do not worry about a one point perspective like a camera lens or depicting the fixed state of the room;**
 - a. So don't be afraid to make drawings fuelled by a rush of panic, or an initial floundering, as there is no need be in control of building a representation in the midst of so much complexity. This exercise will require taking a leap into the dark, and trusting your perceptions however surprising. Drawings can be informal- yet packed with necessary information to trigger feeling, memory, speed, sound and text.
- 4. Think about the drawing as an improvised play, allowing objects to enter, the unpredictable to happen, and object disappearances/exits to take place. How might this influence the evolution of your mark making and can you make appropriate marks;**
 - a. Might you begin to explore and experiment with a range of processes and visual strategies such as; Fingers to smudge, erasures, grouping, selection, editing, re-positioning, hiding, transforming, covering, layering, developing, adding.
 - b. Notice the movement around you- Figures as they pass by, they may interrupt you, disrupt your view, they may be creating shapes as they move by.
 - c. Think about any repetitions around you, the scratching of charcoal, movement of the wrist, observations of the birds, clouds, planes, the traffic below. The class and the city aren't rigid- its full of movement.
- 5. Don't always look at the paper:**
 - a. you may trace if you wish from the window and bring back, draw from, layer over the image.
 - b. Draw to the edge of the paper, so that it becomes equivalent to your visual field; you're not just drawing one object, but taking on the entirety of your visual experience.

STEP 4 SHARE - STEPPING BACK & REFLECTING IN DISCUSSION: Swap to the other groups drawing to reflect on aims:

- What do you notice about the connections made to the objects within the environment?
- How did you Interpret the objects you were looking at in the environment and make an individual connection and response through drawing?
- What was your experience of observing yourself, the room and the city as a collaborative drawing - *How did you add, join, erase, respond to or become inspired by of your actions within the groups emerging drawing?*
- How do you encounter the perspectives and the way the space is arranged within the drawing? Does the image relate to your experience, how?
- How did you respond to movement and ideas of flux? What marks have been acting as descriptive symbols or forms?

A glossary of terminology and Reference's

Baudelaire is a French poet, essayist, critic. Romantic observations of real life. 1821-57

Delacroix – French romantic artist- 1798-63

Odilon Redon- *20th century dreamlike paintings- precursor to surrealism.*

References – Painters - Bubkin Kakar, Chagall over the city, Timothy Hyman, Rose Wiley, Rembrandt, Bonnard sketchbooks, Kitaj collages, Nancy Spero, Chris Offili, Kara Walker.