Foundations

Drawing
An introductory course
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Before you start

Welcome to *Foundations Drawing: An Introductory Course*. This course will help you develop basic drawing skills, explore different ways of using materials and tools, and discover drawing as a pleasurable and inventive activity. On completion of the five parts you will be given feedback to indicate whether you have gained sufficient skills to embark on degree level study with the Open College of the Arts. You’ll find more information about studying with OCA in your Student Handbook so keep this to hand as you work through the course.

Course aims

The aim of the course is to encourage you to observe closely, to appreciate the material aspects of drawing, and to use this direct visual and physical experience as inspiration for future work. You’ll be encouraged to take risks and enjoy the process of drawing for drawing’s sake, at the same time improving your skill and building your confidence in handling a range of materials and methods.

You’ll start to see your own work in a broader context by looking at the work of contemporary artists who approach the act of drawing in different ways.

By the end of the course you can expect to:

- have a developing ability in drawing
- show increasing inventiveness in your approach to materials and tools
- have an improved visual memory
- have a greater understanding of what drawing is and might be
- have more confidence in your potential as an artist and a growing sense of self-reliance
- be able to decide on the nature and direction of your future studies and art practice.

You should supplement your practical studies with academic study. This includes regular visits to exhibitions in museums and galleries (you can attend OCA Study Visits too, just look out for them on the OCA blog weareoca.com). You should also read about artists who use drawing in their work. The development of academic skills is important if you wish to continue onto a higher level of study in the arts, for example to progress onto *Drawing 1: Drawing Skills* with OCA.

This course has been written for new students studying on their own with support at a distance from your tutor. If at any stage you feel confused or stuck, you should find the answer in this course guide. If you continue to have problems, remember that your tutor is there to guide you.
Your tutor and other support
Even though you’ll be studying from home you won’t be working in isolation. You’ll have the support of your tutor, who is your main point of contact with OCA. When you submit an assignment your tutor will comment and advise on your work and try to help with any questions that may have arisen, offering constructive criticism as well as encouragement. Your tutor will also help you to put the course projects and your own work into an appropriate context by making suggestions on texts to read, images to look at, places to visit and artists to study.

You can also draw on the support of your fellow students. There are lots of other OCA students studying drawing. Use the OCA website forums as a place to meet them, share experiences and learn from one another. You may want to start by logging onto the forums and introducing yourself, perhaps find out who else is on the course and say hello.

On the OCA blog you will find lots of posts that explain how to go about different ways of studying. Spend some time familiarizing yourself with the blog and look at it regularly to see new material. Tutors write short pieces about ways of approaching research or record short commentaries related to student work that are examples of good practice. These can help you break down seemingly complex tasks into achievable and enjoyable ones.

Course Support
Course support are able to assist with things that you may find unclear in the exercises, projects and assignments and technical issues such as locating course resources etc. They can act as a point of contact in between tutor communications. Please email coursesupport@oca.ac.uk.
Course structure

The course is split into five parts and you’ll complete a number of projects and exercises for each. At the end of each part of the course you’ll gather together your practical work for these projects to make up your assignment submission. You’ll then send this to your tutor for review. The course comprises:

**Introduction: About drawing**
Here you’ll be introduced to the focus of the course and this will prepare you for the first warm-up exercises. The purpose of these is to help you become more aware of the relationship between your perceptual and physical self when drawing.

**Part One: Marks and lines**
Drawing is all about making marks and lines. There are many ways to do this, and many tools and materials you can use. Part One explores just some of these. If you haven’t done any drawing before, or not for a long time, these exercises will help you relax into drawing.

**Part Two: Tone**
Using tone means you are able to produce contrasts of light and dark in your work. This can make the difference between an ordinary image and a dramatic one – or between realistic and ‘flat’.

**Part Three: Form**
Similarly, learning to use form in drawing means you’re able to offer the illusion of three-dimensional objects, thickness or depth.

**Part Four: Negative and positive spaces, shapes and forms**
This part of the course involves close observation and a different way of looking. You’ll concentrate less on the object itself and more on the spaces between and around it. The final exercise asks you to use all the experience you’ve gained and lessons you’ve learned to produce a self-portrait.

**Part Five: Options**
Here you have four very different choices for the final part of the course. Trying these out will give you the opportunity to think about your next step as an artist and student. Choose at least two of these to develop.

You’ll need to spend between 5 and 10 hours a week on your studies if you wish to complete them in under a year. Most of your time will be spent on practical work. This is because we recognise that, for some, the primary reason for doing this course is to build confidence and enjoy drawing without fear of ‘doing it wrong’. Drawing, like any other skill, requires a lot of practice.

However, this doesn’t mean that drawing is a purely practical activity. It is also conceptual and theoretical. Artistic study means taking the time and effort to think, not only about your own work but also about the work of others. It means reading and discussing what artists, writers, historians, philosophers, critics and others do and say. This will help you to see your own work
within a broader context, so that you can build on what you do in a critically aware, as well as practical manner. If you plan to continue onto a higher level on completion of this course, it’s important to start to engage with the theoretical aspect of drawing at this early stage.

**Getting feedback**
The projects are grouped into five assignments, one for each part of the course. You’ll be advised what to send at the appropriate place in the course. Use the addressed labels provided and make sure that every piece is clearly labelled on the back with your name, student number, and the number and name of the project.

Take note of the suggested date (on your tutor reports) for your next assignment but don’t feel pressurised. These course materials are intended to be used flexibly. Work at a pace that fits in with your life. If you feel you can complete a particular part of the course quickly, then by all means do so. If you feel you need a little longer, that’s fine. However, if there’s going to be a considerable delay (e.g. several months) between assignments, contact your tutor and let them know what’s happening.

Your tutor will send a report by email, commenting constructively on your work for the assignment and offering help and advice. (S)he will then return your assignment work by post. Your tutor will get back to you as soon as possible but this may take a couple of weeks or more. Continue with the course while you’re waiting.
Making a start

Skim through the whole course guide before starting to get a feel for the way you’ll work. Don’t feel you need to read every detail at this stage; this is just a chance to get your bearings. Once you’ve done this, look at the ‘What you’ll need’ list below, and the equipment lists for the individual projects, and begin to collect the materials and tools for the first projects.

If you can’t get hold of everything on the list, don’t worry. You can get started with some cartridge paper, a selection of soft pencils and some erasers.

Follow the projects in the order they’re written. Read the first part of the course thoroughly and ensure you have everything in place before starting. It’s a good idea to read each section several times before you start work so that you know exactly what you’re supposed to be doing. If possible, set yourself a regular timetable. Most of the projects don’t allow for stopping and starting so set aside a realistic amount of time to ensure you’re able to complete each project in one go. There’s no fixed time for the projects but aim to set aside at least an hour per exercise. Try to spend at least five hours a week on the course work. Think carefully about how you can fit this into your week. You may be able to set aside the same day each week or you may want to fit your five hours into parts of days, evenings or the weekend.

Be realistic and don’t set aside weekends if you’re likely to be busy. It might be better to use a couple of evenings instead. Take into account everything you’re likely to need to do in a week, then decide as far as possible on the best time(s) to work with as little interruption as possible. As a distance learner, you’re free to work as slowly or as quickly as you like through the course but bear in mind that leaving long gaps between projects can make it difficult to pick up where you left off. If you find you need more time than you initially expected don’t worry. Work at your own speed. There may be some periods in the year when you can spend substantial amounts of time on course work and others when you’re too busy and have to spend less.
What you’ll need
Try to set aside a quiet place to work, ideally a room with a table or desk where you can shut the door and work in privacy. You’ll need either a smooth wall where you can affix large sheets of paper, or a large board and easel. For some projects (such as monoprint) you’ll need a well-ventilated space with a sink.

You’ll need to check for any specific requirements before starting each project but here’s a general list of equipment that you’ll need throughout the course:

- A4 and A3 sketchbooks
- sheets of drawing paper in a range of sizes up to A1
- large loose-leaf folder or ring binder for your written work and research
- lightweight plastic portfolio (A1) and recyclable wrapping (to send assignments to your tutor)
- smooth board (slightly larger than A1)
- masking tape
- willow and compressed charcoal sticks
- various kinds of eraser
- charcoal fixative spray
- graphite pencils (2B to 8B)
- selection of black pens, biros, fibre tips, fine liners, brush pens, etc.
- selection of drawing materials and tools for experimentation (carpenter’s pencils, calligraphy pen, oriental brush pen, etc.)
- a range of soft and stiff brushes for acrylic paint, glue and ink
- PVA glue
- black water soluble ink
- black acrylic paint (System 3, Cryla or similar)
- oily and chalky pastels and conté sticks in a range of colours
- black printing ink (oil based)
- two small printing rollers
- two clear acrylic (Perspex) sheets approx A4 size
- turpentine or substitute
- small glass jars with lids
- chopsticks or twigs
- craft knife, small and large scissors
- clean rags, kitchen roll
- smooth wall space
- roll (or part roll) of decorator’s lining paper or other large sheets of paper
- masking tape and drawing pins.
Paper sizes
Throughout the course you’ll be using a lot of different ‘A’ paper sizes. The dimensions of these are:

- A1 594 x 841mm
- A2 420 x 594mm
- A3 297 x 420mm
- A4 210 x 297mm
- A5 148 x 210mm
- A6 105 x 148mm

Note that two A4 sheets stuck together make A3, and two A3 make A2 (and so on).

The largest paper format available in most art shops is A0, but you can buy paper on a roll if you wish to work bigger.

Your sketchbook
Use your sketchbook as much as possible – every day if you can. Your sketchbook is a visual diary where you draw people, places, skies, clouds, machines, textures, patterns, shadows – anything that inspires you. Use it to capture your observations of the ordinary and the unusual.

Alongside lots of sketches and visual ideas, you can stick things into the book that catch your eye.

These might include:
- scraps of patterned paper
- drawings you’ve done elsewhere that don’t have a home
- postcards of art works you admire or that seem important to you
- other visual material that you need to think about.
Hopefully your sketchbook will develop in exciting and experimental ways. You’ll probably notice your approach changing as you work your way through the course. Your sketchbook will inevitably contain awkward and unfinished studies as well as more accomplished images. Some drawings take seconds whereas others can take hours. Some drawings will be tiny and others large, spreading across two pages or extending beyond the edges of the paper. Use ‘fold-outs’ or ‘concertinas’ to make new shapes or to accommodate even larger work. A good sketchbook tends to burst with work.

Sketchbooks are your working and thinking tools, places for trying out ideas and taking risks. Think of it as a place where ‘happy accidents’ can happen and not just a place where you make drawings that are in preparation for something. It ought to be a place of play and experimentation where ideas and images can collide to make something new. Regular experimentation in your sketchbook will help develop visual awareness and creativity.

For more information, take a look at the study guide Keeping Sketchbooks on the OCA website.
Your learning log

Your learning log is a kind of research journal where you record your progress through the course and your studies into other artists’ work. Here you’ll write about why an artist or art work interests you, and why it’s relevant to a particular project, and to your own work.

It’s here that you’ll reflect on what you’re learning, too. Doing this will help your tutor understand your decisions which means that the feedback you receive can be tailored to you.

Reflect on the effectiveness of your work. The following list can help you get started. Keep asking yourself things like:

• What worked, and why?
• What didn’t work, and why?
• Were there any surprises?
• What was more difficult than you thought it would be?
• What will you take forward from the experience?
• What would you do differently, if you were to do it again? (And why not do it again to find out if that works, and so on?)

This is also the place for questioning and analysing information. If you have questions about a theme, artist, movement, etc., you can work this through in your log, doing further study, looking for sources, asking questions. Your learning log is also the place to reflect on your drawing practice, jotting down problems, changes of direction, thoughts on future projects, techniques to try, etc.

Your learning log can take a variety of forms and be any size but, at the start of your studies, the simplest will be an A3 or A4 loose-leaf folder or ring binder. This format allows you to add and move information, including your tutor reports, your notes on texts you’ve read, documentation of visits and other material. Some students choose to post their learning log as an online blog, you can find a Wordpress template on the OCA student site. This allows your tutor to view your work as it develops. The choice is yours.

At this early stage in your studies, your learning log should contain evidence of your developing interest in art of the past and present. Where artists are referenced in the course guide, you should look these up and comment on their work, ideas, techniques, and so on. This is the start of your journey as a thoughtful and well-informed artist. It will help your tutor if you are clear about the artists who influence you. What do take from them? Is it the subject matter, or a technique, or perhaps the way they use colour? It might be something else entirely, but don’t be afraid to write explicitly about the things you borrow. You won’t be alone. Most artists incorporate elements of other people’s work into their own – especially when starting out – so don’t be afraid of appropriating bits of other artist’s work into yours. It’ll come out differently anyway, and you’ll have made something new.

A good place to get inspiration is Austin Kleon’s book *Steal Like an Artist*. You’ll find it in the Reading List.

For more information on keeping learning logs, see the Introducing *Learning Logs* study guide on the OCA website, and if you decide to keep a blog, look at the guide *Keeping an online learning blog* also on the OCA website.
Viewing art
Seeing the work of other artists ‘in the flesh’ is an important aspect of art study and a source of inspiration, a way to pick up new and exciting ideas. Look online and make a note of exhibitions of contemporary drawing. Visit as many as you can. If you're travelling some distance, plan your time carefully and try not to cram too many major galleries into your day. As already mentioned you may want to join other OCA students and staff on study visits. These are regularly advertised on the OCA blog weareoca.com.

If you are unfamiliar with contemporary art and interested in understanding more, Ossian Ward’s book *Ways of Looking* is a great place to start. It’s in the reading list.

Reading
Look at the essential reading reading list on the next page, you can find a more comprehensive list at the end of this course. Try to look at the books in your local library before buying. Your library may be able to order them for you at a reasonable cost.

You may not be able to read all the books in the list, but try to look at as many as possible. Read about contemporary artists as well as their predecessors in order to appreciate the depth of ideas that inspire and affect drawing today.

Good luck with the course!
Reading and resources

The following list contains some of the texts that have inspired the writing of this course. These contain images and texts by contemporary artists who use drawing in their work. Many are available to purchase online or to borrow from your local library. You may also be able to view these and others in your local college or university library.

The list is not exhaustive and you’re encouraged to look for other books, websites, journals, etc., to inspire your studies. If you decide to continue to the next level you’ll be required to carry out and log your research and using some of the resources below will be the start of that process.

Foundations

About drawing

OCA student Toby Upson
“Draw everywhere, and all the time. An artist is a sketchbook with a person attached.”

There’s so much to say about drawing – what, where, and how. Drawing has always been there, appearing on the walls of caves, tombs, modest homes and grand monuments, scratched into animal bones, pasted onto ceramics or woven into textiles.

Drawing is a trace of all our histories, a way for people to leave fragments of their own thoughts, activities, stories and events. The surfaces, tools, materials and mechanics of drawing have evolved over time. Throughout history artists have extended the act of drawing and indicated time passing through series and groups of images: friezes, mosaics, frescos and other architectural adornments. In the twentieth century creative use of the moving image pushed this still further, extending the act of drawing via the cartoon, changing our perception from that of a stand-alone picture to a more complex, time-based and multi-framed viewpoint.

From the start of the twentieth century, drawing became something other than a way of transferring a three-dimensional object onto a two-dimensional picture plane. The drawn line or mark became more exploratory, dynamic, conceptual or abstract, and drawing became an art form in its own right rather than a tool for copying ‘reality’.

If we regard drawing simply as a way of leaving a mark, then anything and everything can be appropriated as tool, material, surface or subject. The material world has height, width, depth, surfaces, angles, lines, marks, textures, patterns and tones – all words associated with the practice of drawing.
Whether planning a storyboard for a film, trying to capture the movement of a flying bird, or articulating an abstract form, drawing enables us to translate – through visual and material means – what we see, think, sense and feel.

At times the activity of drawing may mean working in a state of absorption – at one with our thoughts, measuring time through marking, pressing, stroking, rubbing, dragging materials and tools across a surface, flicking at specks of charcoal, wiping away oily smears, or scratching into layers to reveal the underneath. In this sense the act of drawing means marking time, leaving traces of our thoughts and activities for others who’ll view the work in another place and time. At other times we’ll work in a more ‘social’ manner, sharing our ideas during group sessions, engaging in discussions with other artists and working collaboratively. The prevailing sense of drawing today is one of freedom, with artists using a range of approaches in attempts to realise their ideas.

“Drawing will always be at the heart of the visual arts. The key shift that has occurred is that drawing as an activity is now believed to be acceptable for public presentation, rather than only suitable for private research or study. This is a change in perception, not just on the part of artists but significantly by museums, commercial galleries and critics.”

There is drawing everywhere in our world, and the deeper you explore its crevices, twists and turns and hidden spaces, the more exciting, diverse and thrilling it becomes.

Drawing allows us to engage in playful activity or deep contemplation, and as sketchbooks and piles of paper thick with charcoal, ink and oil pile up on our shelves, we can return to them, flick through the pages – smelling, touching and viewing our images, revisiting the thoughts, provocations, irritations and joys that went into their being. Surely this is what drawing is all about.
The course
This course is meant for all those who, for one reason or another, want a better understanding of what drawing is and can be today. The best way to begin is to immerse yourself in a range of activities that will take you out of your comfort zone and give you the opportunity to experience different ways of thinking and making.

Drawing, like playing the piano, is best learned through practice, through the physical doing of it, and this is where your sketchbook comes into its own. Don’t be afraid of the seemingly endless expanse of blank pages. And remember there’s no rule that says you have to draw on a white background. Paint a few sheets or pages in different colours to undo their blank newness and look for other surfaces to draw on: newspaper, the backs of old envelopes, scraps of card … the list is endless. You can even make your own sketchbooks, keeping the sheets together in a ring binder.

Carry your smaller sketchpad(s) around with you and look at the world with the intention of capturing some of its moments through drawing. Use it as a visual diary, sketching small everyday events as well as working on more ambitious projects. Try to interpret what you see wherever you are, using a range of lines, marks, colours and forms.

If you have a Smartphone you may have a drawing app on it. Use that! If you carry it with you at all times this is a great way to keep you drawing regularly. It has the additional advantage that you can draw without being noticed. People will think you are texting.
Continual practice using different methods and materials means we gradually adjust our ways of seeing and begin to observe the world from the point of view of an artist. Looking, sensing and translating the world differently can lead to a new and exciting visual language. Close observation accompanied by deep thought and creative activity is at the core of every art form, whether the subject is imaginary or ‘real’. Seeing and questioning the world we live in through drawing means adopting and becoming fluent in a new language, method or technique, communicating our ideas differently but confidently.

One important aspect of this course is experimentation and this requires an open-minded approach to drawing and thinking. In order to gain as much as possible from the projects, work through all of the exercises (except in Part Five where you have a range of options). This means trying things that may not at first make sense to you, but persevere and you’ll eventually be able to look back and understand why it was important to do a particular task.

The best way to start is to read through the whole course guide, slowly taking in the information and seeing how one part relates to the next. Working through the course in the order it’s written will enable you to gain confidence, and this will inevitably translate into your drawings.
**Draw, draw, draw**

While you are studying this course, do as much drawing as you can. It may help to start joining some drawing workshops. There are a lot of life drawing workshops available even if you don’t live in a big city. Search on the internet or in your local library. In addition to traditional drawing workshops there are lots of other ways you can participate.

Look up: [www.drsketchylondon.co.uk/](http://www.drsketchylondon.co.uk/) and see if there is a group near you. Alternatively, search for ‘sketch crawl’ in your locality.

While it can be tempting to work from photographs or to trace source material and then turn it into a drawing, you won’t learn much. It’s true that some artists do use these techniques but generally only after they have mastered the basics like you’re trying to do. Working from life is a challenge and it’s because it’s difficult that you’ll be able to learn and progress. Wrestling with the problem of turning a three-dimensional view into a two-dimensional representation isn’t easy, but it is worth it.

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OCA student Toby Upson
Working with other artists
Find a good balance between working alone and sharing your work with others. Communication between students and artists plays a huge part in gaining confidence and enjoying your practice. Relating what you do to what others are doing means you become part of a community of artists, and this echoes what happens in the ‘real world’.

There still exists a preconception that all good artists work in an ivory tower, alone in some kind of mystic bubble. In the twenty-first century this rarely applies. Art students who shut themselves off will miss out on good advice and constructive criticism from their peers. Artists who work in isolation often find it difficult to show their work. Offers of solo shows are thin on the ground; most good galleries expect you to have built a reputation before offering you their expensive wall space. The best way to gain experience is through communicating, working and exhibiting with other artists. Artists today engage in constant dialogue, sharing ideas and organising exhibitions and other events.

Examples of such communities are: artist-run studios/galleries (for example Phoenix in Brighton, Rogue in Manchester and Motorcade/FlashParade in Bristol); websites/portfolios (Axis and Tracey); online art research groups (ZAP, ZeitgeistArtsProjects, in London, Space Place Practice in Bristol and Bath); and social networking groups that come together occasionally to engage in collaborative practices, including ‘guerilla’ arts – graffiti, pop-up exhibitions in empty shops, open studio events and other urban and rural interventions. These exist alongside the more traditional artist-led workshops such as life drawing and printmaking. You might want to start with groups in your local area, but be ambitious and don’t stay with a group that doesn’t inspire you.

The OCA has its own online community with new methods of interaction between students and staff emerging all the time – regular trips to major exhibitions around the UK, student-led online ‘hangout’ sessions where you chat with other students and view each other’s work, and invitations to view portfolios and carry out critiques of work. Keep looking at the OCA website for information, and begin the process by adding comments to a forum or blog. Here you'll also see conversations between students enrolled on Drawing 1: Drawing Skills (D1), which – should you decide to continue your studies with OCA – may be your next step on completion of this course. (Students on D1 follow a similar pathway to this course but are required to work more rigorously in order to gain the technical and conceptual skills required at the start of degree level study. For further information take a look on the OCA student website.)

“Drawing seems very elemental and inherently human. It is the most ‘true’ art form in a way...”

(Cornelia Parker, cited in Drawing Projects ibid)
A final note: The thing to remember at the start of your journey is that drawing is, and always has been, flexible and evolving; it is verb and noun, activity and thing, social and private. It may be big or small, single or multiple, animated or still. Your own drawing may be all or none of these things, but what is certain is that – like any other skill – learning to draw well requires commitment, practice and experimentation, and this is where we begin …

Frank Auerbach, *Study for a Tree on Primrose Hill*, 1985, ink and crayon
Warm up

“My work isn’t really about anything in particular. There are certain themes that repeat themselves, but it’s not something I’m conscious of at the time. I guess my work is mostly intuitive. You could say it was an elaborate form of doodling.”

(David Shrigley quoted in the Guardian 19/9/2009)

This first section is intended to help you loosen up and rid yourself of some of the tightness that people new to drawing often experience. The projects are:

• 0.1 Drawing small and big
• 0.2 Drawing in long and short bursts
• 0.3 Using your fingers wrist, elbow, shoulder

You’ll need

• masking tape
• table or large board
• small (A5) sketchbook and large (up to approx A1) pieces of paper including ‘found’ paper (lining paper, brown paper, newsprint, etc.)
• a range of black pens with fine and thick points
• graphite pencils (soft B grades)
• thick compressed charcoal sticks and thinner willow sticks.
**Project 0.1 Drawing small and big**

**Exercise Drawing small**
Use masking tape to attach the corners of the smaller sheets to a table or board. This will prevent them from moving while you work. Don't worry about neatness. This is simply a warming up exercise.

You must do this exercise in one go.

Looking down, and starting at the left corner of one of the sheets, take a pen or pencil and hold it near the tip, as you would if you were writing. Now begin to draw slanting oval forms over and over again, working from the left to the right, returning to the left and starting all over again for the next row. Keep going until you’ve filled the paper with oval forms.

With another tool, do the same on a fresh sheet using your other 'wrong' hand. Keep going until you’ve filled the sheet with slanting circles. Don’t worry about accuracy or neatness. Swop hands again and fill another sheet, finishing on a fourth sheet using your 'wrong' hand.

Now reflect on what you’ve just done. When you used your 'good' side, how much of your hand was touching the paper? Which part of your hand did most of the work? What happened when you swopped to the other side? Did the position of your hand change? Did your hand try to take you in a different direction – from right to left? When you returned to your 'good' side did you speed up and did the forms change compared to when you started? Were you tempted to link the shapes into a spiral as you might if you were doing 'joined up' writing?
Exercise Drawing big

Once again, work on a flat surface (use a table or large board), looking down. You’ll need an A1 sheet of paper, masking tape and a couple of thick sticks of compressed or willow charcoal.

Fix the paper to the table or board in ‘landscape’ format (with the longest sides at the top and bottom) and, using your ‘right’ hand, hold the drawing tool firmly in your fist with the drawing end facing downwards at right angles to the paper.

Starting at the top left of the rectangle, draw the same kind of elliptical form, but this time draw downwards (as though making a list). When you reach the bottom of the column, swop over to your ‘wrong’ hand and begin again, drawing the next column of forms close to the last. Continue in this way, swopping hands until you’ve completely filled the sheet with vertical columns of ellipses. Don’t leave any gaps and don’t return to redo or undo any part of your drawing.

As before, reflect on what you’ve achieved. How was the experience of drawing big using a crumbly, smudgy medium compared to the experience of drawing small with a tight and neat medium?
Project 0.2 Drawing in short and long bursts

**Exercise Short bursts**
This time you’ll work standing up. Attach a sheet of A1 paper to a wall or upright easel with the centre of the sheet at eye level.

Using a sharpened willow charcoal stick, begin at the centre of the sheet and draw while counting to five, using very fast and regular rhythmic movements to create short, tight and continuous marks around half an inch long. Keep the momentum going, swopping hands and changing the direction of the marks on a count of five. Keep moving around the paper, until you’ve achieved several patches of intense pattern.

Step back, pause and look closely at the results. Think about whether your marks convey the energy and speed of your activity.

Now decide how to fill the rest of the space. Take a while to consider the size, thickness, direction, etc., of the marks you’ll make. The first decision is how and where to start. Will you begin to encircle the smaller patches with bigger versions? Will you work from left to right, top to bottom, outwards from the centre, inwards from the sides? Or more randomly? Will you overlap or cover up your previous marks? Will you let the medium crumble and smudge? Or will you try to control it, keep it neat? When you’ve given it some thought, move on to the next stage – working in longer bursts.
Exercise Long bursts

Take your time over this second stage (at least 15 minutes) and try to be conscious of the time you take to make a mark and the movements you make to create it. Think about speeding up and slowing down, swopping from right to left hand. You’ll probably need several willow sticks for this session, so keep them close by.

When the willow stick becomes very short, use it on its side, gripping it with your finger tips and nails, letting it create thick and wide marks. Use both hands – perhaps at the same time. Create a range of marks, short and long, straight, curved, angular ...

When you pick up a new willow stick note how it makes finer sharper marks. When you use your ‘wrong’ hand consider whether the marks have the same quality. Keep going until the entire sheet
Project 0.3 Using your fingers, wrist, elbow, shoulder

In the first warm-up exercise you drew using just two fingers and a thumb, gripping the pencil or pen firmly, with the other fingers and side of the hand acting as support for the pencil or pen. In the second exercise you may have felt it necessary to angle your hand differently, lifting your fingers and hand above the paper to avoid smudging the soft willow charcoal marks. You may also have become more aware of the role of your elbow in drawing.

These next exercises in still this awareness and show you how different ways of moving your body can create different effects. For example, holding the pencil, pen or brush at the top (letting it dangle from your finger tips) gives you far less control and because of this you may find that unexpected marks appear.

Exercise Fingers and wrist
Take a soft graphite pencil or black felt tip pen and work in your small sketchbook. Keep your upper arm and elbow absolutely still and grip the tool at the top with your finger tips and thumb. Hold it lightly, let it dangle, just touching the paper. Moving only your wrist back and forth, side to side, round and round, let the tip wander loosely and delicately across the paper.

This exercise should make you more aware of the role that your fingers and wrists play.
Many artists work on a very large scale, using walls, floors, sheets and rolls of paper. Contemporary artist Rachel Evans works in this way, revisiting the practices of artists from a previous generation, artists who engage in what might be described as ‘action drawing’, testing what drawing is and experiencing its many forms through physical activity.

Another exemplar of this genre is Tom Marioni, who began working in the seventies. Before you begin the following exercises you may want to see him creating large drawings on his website www.tommarioni.com
**Exercise At arm’s length**

For this exercise pin or tape a large (minimum A1) sheet of paper onto a wall using a ‘portrait’ (vertical) format.

Take a thick compressed charcoal stick and distance yourself from the wall at arm’s length so that the end of the charcoal stick is just touching the paper. Keeping your arm straight, swipe the charcoal in a downwards stroke from the top right of the paper to the bottom. Work quickly, in one go, then swap hands and do the same for the other side. You should now have two thick stripes on both edges of the paper.

Move the charcoal back to your right hand and drag the charcoal from the bottom to the top of the sheet, working inwards from one of your previous marks. Swap hands and do the same on the other side. Keep going up and down, right and left, moving in from both sides towards the centre until the sheet is filled with vertical stripes.

Take down this sheet and start with a fresh one for the next exercise.

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**Exercise Using your shoulder**

For this exercise, keep your elbows straight and let your shoulders do the work.

Take a thick stick of charcoal and stand at arm’s length, keeping your arm straight as before. Starting at the right edge, work in an anti-clockwise direction and draw as large a circle as you can, sweeping clockwise and anti-clockwise until the circle is rich and dark. Swap hands and do the same starting at the opposite edge of the paper (working clockwise to start). Keep working and swapping hands until the two circles overlap at the centre of the sheet.
Start your learning log by writing a few lines about your experience of these warm-up exercises.

What have you learned? You don’t need to write a lot, just a few paragraphs to try to put your thoughts into words.

Think about:
• How you felt when using your shoulder
• What it felt like to use the ‘wrong’ hand
• How do the shapes interact on the paper? Do they touch and what does the space between them look like?
• Do the images you’ve made start to look like something identifiable?
• Does the work you’ve made remind you of any art you’ve seen?
• And so on…

You’re now ‘warmed up’ and ready to begin work on Part One.
Assignment one

Send a selection of work from the exercises in Part One to your tutor for review, together with your notes and any questions you may have. Some of your work may be sent by email provided that you’ve agreed this with your tutor in advance.

Put your name, student number and project number on the back of each piece of work. Include a selection of pages from your sketchbook and learning log (or blog url). Don't worry if you haven’t got much in your learning log yet – it will still be useful for your tutor to see how it’s developing.

Your tutor may take a while to get back to you so carry on with the course while you’re waiting. Well done, you have now completed the first part of the course.