

# **Drawing 300**

## **Final Self-Assessment**

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**DRAW 300 – Section AA**  
**Professor: Janice Flood Turner**

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While my wish right from the very beginning of the year was to learn as much as possible and be inspired by the other students and my professor, I really wanted to try once again to break away from the very tight, controlled and realistic style I have felt uncontrollably glued to the past. Until I entered Concordia, I only knew one way of drawing and painting. I considered myself an excellent copyist and knew from experience that given enough time I could make any drawing as photo-realistic as I wanted. I had honed my powers of observations and realistic styling techniques to a very comfortable level and at the same time I continued to find ways to challenge myself within this style finding opportunities to draw things I had never attempted before. Working this way can feel relaxing, comfortable and extremely meditative. And one could argue that there is nothing wrong with this. For many artists and art lovers this is perfectly acceptable but my dream is to redefine myself as an artist, to be open to new ideas and experiences and to be willing to follow a new path if it presents itself. It doesn't mean I "have to" draw differently; I just want to be open to it, that's all. Of course this is all easier said than done as I have personally learned in the past few years of school as I struggle to make this a reality and break free. What continues to motivate me is this inherent feeling that there is more inside of me, it's like this little boy that's calling out to be more expressive, the little boy that wants to finally let go of the past.

My first semester started out as an exploration of drawing mediums and techniques. I explored the use of pencil, ink, conté, pastel and various types of charcoal. I initially started working on different kinds of papers trying different textures, colours and weights and later moved to working on gessoed canvas. I tried not to limit myself to just one scale of drawing by working on both small pieces and also on very large 4' x 6' formats. My technique improved not only through my own investigation at home but especially through the classroom studies and exercises. With the help of Janice Flood Turner, these exercises forced me to step out of my controlled form of drawing and by pure necessity due to the speed at which we needed to draw the models in motion I had to open up my drawing style. My preferred and perhaps most successful medium during the 1<sup>st</sup> four months was the deeply rich black compressed charcoal. This richness of the black charcoal and the raw application using my hands without any other mediums appealed greatly to my sense of grounding.

The first semester also graciously gave me precious insight into my past, present and where I wanted to go. My personal discoveries all revolved around the subject of my drawings (female nudes) and the apparent source and inspirations of these subjects. On the surface it was very easy for me to say that I was motivated to draw the female nude simply because I was interested in investigating the figure and that I found the female body more appealing. But there are a lot of ways to draw the female nude! And why did I "really" choose the female body? Was I really being honest with myself as to why? Because I didn't have live models to work from, I choose to use photos or drawings of female nudes from old books that my grandfather had left for me. So why did I choose this source material versus something else? Was my drive to use this material based on some sort of respect for my grandfather or some form of communicating with him? The answer to these questions did not arrive quickly or without internal struggle but in the end they came flowing through.

This experience proved to be very fruitful in that it set the course for my second semester. The first semester helped me realize that where my motivation was coming from, I could now embrace it, accept it and move on if I chose to. At this point I chose to move in a completely different direction with my source material. I have always felt inspired by the many people who have made a positive contribution in history towards peace in this world. On doing my research I came across a web site that was dedicated to women Nobel Peace Prize laureates. The more I read the more I was inspired by these women. Considering how much women have contributed to peace in the last 100 years how is it possible that only

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10 women have been recognized? A definite oversight in my view! My source material now became a way for me to share this imbalance with my classmates.

In review of the entire year, I feel that it was complete success and surpassed many of my expectations. I was inspired by my classmates who are extremely creative and helpful. My drawing techniques improved especially in the speed of application and use of charcoal. I experimented with different kinds and sizes of supports. The textural and gestural quality of my drawings improved significantly. Although not completely, I did break away for the tight controlled style of my past and created drawings with the same sense as the many artists that inspired me this year and while the exploration is just beginning, I feel that several of my pieces succeeded in this area. In the second semester I focused primarily on the techniques I had developed in the first semester with compressed charcoal. I fell in love with this medium throughout the year and even now want to continue to explore its use. The large pieces of charcoal again forced me to be more gestural and open with my application of the medium giving my work a freer, looser feeling to them.

My biggest break through artistically however came more from how differently I'm looking at the subject of my drawings. Trying to imitate the drawing style of the many artists that inspired me throughout the year has given my work a different feeling compared to my earlier drawings. In the first term my primary inspiration came from the beautiful drawings of Lawrence Brullo, Courbet, Daumier, Degas, Goya and Renoir. In the second term I continued to study these artists as a source of inspiration but added and worked using primarily the styles of Seurat and Jim Dine. Their styles, although very different appealed to me because they leave a lot for the viewer to complete. Looking at their drawings up close it is often difficult to discern the real subject but in viewing them from a distance they come alive and all at once we see exactly what the artist wants us to see. The detail is no longer necessary as we complete the remaining pieces with our own eyes. How beautiful it is to be able to engage the viewer at this level! Wow! The viewer is no longer a simple observer but an integral part of the work which only comes alive when they are there. With several of my later pieces this semester I feel that I accomplished this. The beauty of the spontaneity of the application is very evident when one is only a few inches from the drawing and then as soon as one stands more than 10 feet away the detail of the face of the women tends to increase. The further one gets away from the drawing the more realistic it becomes. This has given me a whole new way of see the subject of my drawings. No longer to search for or start from a point of detail. This was a critical step for me. I feel now that I have a different reference point. I can start as loose and free as I want and then based on my motivation I can chose to go deeper and deeper into the detail. The viewer who stands away from the drawing is seeing the subject but the viewer who is only a few inches away from the drawing is now seeing what I see when I look at the subject with this different perspective.