

Artist Kelly Reedy will be sharing some of her favorite kids' art projects with students, parents and teachers over the coming months. Students aged 7 to 12 made the following project, but younger children will also enjoy doing it!

How many shades in a shadow?

with artist Kelly Reedy

Studio Arts
4 kids + adults

Learning to draw is the first step to becoming an artist. Using charcoal sticks is an excellent material to begin with as marks made with charcoal are easily changed or corrected. Charcoal (carbonized wood) is the oldest drawing medium known to humankind and has even been found in prehistoric cave art! Today it is best used on special charcoal papers (which have a slight surface texture) along with a kneaded eraser (cleanable putty-like material), a blending stump and a rag. Charcoal sticks come in various sizes and degrees of hardness allowing for tonal as well as line work. I will show you how to make a realistic drawing by creating the illusion of light and shadow. This technique is called "chiaroscuro" drawing, coming from an Italian word meaning light (chiaro) and dark (scuro). You must look very closely at the different shades in each shadow!



Bottle and Fruit



Tone the paper.

1. First tone the charcoal paper a medium gray by rubbing the side of the charcoal stick over it. You may need to break your stick into smaller pieces (approximately 5cm in length) for easier use. Use a soft rag to blend the charcoal into an even tone. Don't be afraid to get your fingers dirty!

2. Observe your still life. What is the shape of the bottle and fruit composition as a whole? Lightly draw that shape. Next decide on the individual shapes of each still life object. Sketch them within the general compositional shape. The most important thing at this stage is to get the relationship of the general shapes and proportions correct in comparison to each other. Next look for the

reflections of the light, use your kneaded eraser to lift up the charcoal and create these highlights wherever necessary. Break off a small piece of your eraser and knead it into a point in order to make fine lines; use it almost like a pencil!



Sketch the general shapes.



Put in the dark and light tones.



Blend the edges of the tones.

3. Study your still life. Darken areas with your charcoal to create the nuances in the shadows. Continue to use your kneaded eraser to bring up the highlights. Rub out the general compositional shape lines or any errors with your rag.

4. As you build up the detailed tones, blend the edges of the dark and light areas together to create the feeling of a realistic 3D object with your blending stump or cloth rag. Spray a fixative on your drawing to protect it from smearing when finished.

Here are several of my students' still life drawings of a pumpkin and gourd or dragon fruit using charcoal. Set up your own still life and have fun!



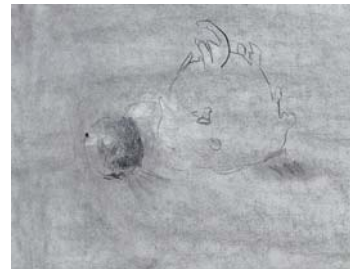
Mia Levy-Groth, age 9



Alyssa Spaeth, age 9



Francesca Levy-Groth, age 7



Barak Melamed, age 9

For more information about the artist and Studio Arts courses for children and adults, please visit www.kellyreedy.com