



# A DAY IN THE ARTS

## Making art accessible to all

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### TIPS ON PENCIL PORTRAIT SKETCHING

#### SKETCHING A CHIN SUPPORTING HAND INCLUDING SHOULDERS

by Robert Thomson

In this expose we discuss the considerations you need to think off when rendering a model whose hand supports the head and whose shoulder is visible.

Including a hand in your portraits adds a significant measure of drama but can quickly destroy an otherwise fine portrait if done incorrectly.

The goal is to incorporate the hand so that it is not only proportionally and gestural right, but is in agreement in personality with the expression of the face.

For example, a pleasant facial expression juxtaposed with a clenched fist may not yield the effect you want unless you intend to add an ironic twist to your portrait. On the other hand, a hand supporting the head fits very well with a stern scowling expression.

First, absolute novices should not be trying to render both the hand and encompassing arabesque, which in this situation,



Rembrandt van Rijn, "A Woman Sleeping" (detail), c. 1655, The British Museum, London

portrait together. Things will quickly get muddled. The lesson for the absolute novice here is to get a grasp of the significance of acquiring a solid foundation of your craft.

In a pose where a hand supports the head there is a subtle forward tilt because the subject is slightly hunched and leaning forward. For the artist, this situation translates into the presence of a delicately foreshortened and reclined portrait. In the hand/head case this means that the chin is somewhat receding relative to the forehead.

As always, you should start with the all

#### WORD OF THE DAY

##### Naturalism

A style in which an artist intends to represent a subject as it appears in the natural world — precisely and objectively — as opposed to being represented in a stylized or intellectually manipulated manner. Although naturalism is often used interchangeably with the term realism, there is a difference between them.

Source: [artlex.com/](http://artlex.com/)



"Without atmosphere a painting is nothing"  
- Dutch artist  
**Rembrandt van Rijn**

#### ART AEROBICS

Practice you drawing skills

After reading the article at left, practice your own portrait today. Include hands. Unlimited time. 📧



Rembrandt van Rijn, "Saskia Looking out of a Window" (detail), c. 1633-34, 236 x 178 mm., Boymans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam

includes the hand and the shoulder. If you first render the head and then attach the hand to it you are definitely asking for trouble. The hand and the head will lack harmony and will give the awkward impression that they are two distinct objects that are coincidentally next to each other.

When drawing the construct be aware of the negative as well as the positive spaces. Also, do not pre-measure any aspects of the construct. It should be sketched with as much flair as possible without losing your sense of size. Sketch first then verify.

Further build upon the construct by locating the face, hand, and shoulder markers and sizes. The internal architecture of the construct is initiated by blocking-in the key darks and painting out the lights with a kneaded eraser.

What you are doing is to set the stage for rendering the facial features, the hand, and the shoulder. The hand must be positioned and sized in accordance with the head and the facial features. The compression of the jaw into the palm must also be taken into account.

Making use of a sharp pencil you can now further develop the tone and shape with blending, stumping down, and erasing. In this, you will be going back and forth hoping that you know when to quit. Sketching is about making decisions, i.e., knowing what to build up and, just as relevant, knowing what to leave out.

In the hand/head situation you have to be extra careful how far you develop the hand. The hand should be seen as a prop, that is, a supporting element that should not be part of the focus. Do not feel compelled to refine every element in your drawing. Everything in sketching is about balance and communicating your meaning directly to the viewer's eye.

In closing, it is critical to see the hand and the shoulder as parts of one whole. Starting your drawing with rendering the construct will help you greatly with maintaining this harmony. Treat the hand and shoulder as supporting elements that surround the face. This means that you should render them in a subordinate role. ➤

*Remi Engels is a practicing pencil portrait draftsman and oil painter and practiced drawing teacher. See his work at Pencil Portraits by Remi: <http://www.remipencilportraits.com>  
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## ART NEWS

### BONHAMS OLD MASTER SALE

**Bonhams** next sale of Old Master paintings on July 8th in New Bond Street, offers stunning views of some of the highlights of The Grand Tour by some of the masters of

the time.

Today, when the capturing of images by cameras, phone, video and film have become commonplace we forget the power and the impact and the privilege of having images of places one has visited. Many of the band of aristocratic travelers on the Continent during the height of the Grand Tour took the opportunity to return home with the modern equivalent of tourist snapshots. But few tourist snapshots will hold their enchantment or their value in the way that these

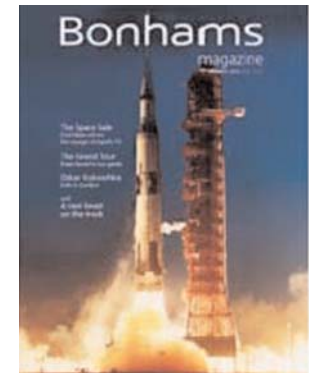
breathtaking images have done for centuries.

Images of Venice, Rome, Florence, the Bay of Naples and Vesuvius, pulse with life and colour in images that must have kept alive the journey of a lifetime for those lucky enough to undertake them and for their descendants. Today we are fortunate to be able to follow in their footsteps and see the views they saw thanks to a development that allowed artists to tackle images of a non-religious nature.

To learn more or view the paintings for sale, visit: <http://www.bonhams.com/oldmasters>

### BONHAMS ON-LINE MAGAZINE

Speaking of Bonhams, they have an excellent on-line publication that showcases various auctions, artists and more. You can view the current and past issues: <http://tinyurl.com/mddlcp>



### SKETCHING IN SAMA'S GALLERIES

Did you know you can get FREE art instruction at the **San Antonio Museum of Art**, working with some of the city's best artists and art educators? The instructor for June is Regis Shepherd, Instructor and Department Chair at St. Phillips College. In July, Jayne Lawrence, an artist specializing in sculpture and drawing, will facilitate. See her work in Waterflow, in SAMA's Focus Gallery, and in Texas Draws at the Southwest School of Art & Craft.

Enjoy an evening of casual instruction based on the works of art found in the **San Antonio Museum of Art** collections. Each



Francesco Zuccarelli (Pitigliano 1702-1788 Florence), An Italianate landscape with washerwomen beside a waterfall and horsemen and their dogs approaching; and An Italianate landscape with a beggar beside a country path, a village in the distance, oil on paper, laid down on canvas, 39.3 x 58cm (15 1/2 x 22 13/16in). (2), Estimate: £50,000 - 80,000, €58,000 - 92,000



sketching session will provide participants the opportunity to improve their drawing skills while exploring new techniques presented by the instructor. Sketching in the Galleries is a free program offered to visitors ages 12 and up and is open to all levels of experience. Attendance is limited to 20, so arrive early to ensure your participation. Participants are encouraged to bring their own sketchpads and pencils. <http://tinyurl.com/lc4ob2>

### SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES JEFF KOONS INSTALLATION

The **Saint Louis Art Museum** announces the installation of artist **Jeff Koons'** "Balloon Rabbit Wall Relief (Magenta)", *right*, in Sculpture Hall. On view beginning June 23, visitors can take in Koons' 9-foot-6-inch tall wall sculpture, a silkscreened image printed on stainless steel.

Koons transforms this banal object—a staple of children's birthday parties, fairs and carnivals—into large-scale sculpture. In this series, Koons prints a photographic image onto a thin sheet of stainless steel, merging three distinct media—photography, printmaking and sculpture—into a grand hybrid. This installation, on loan from the private collection of

Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, will be on view in Sculpture Hall.

The Saint Louis Art Museum is one of the nation's leading comprehensive art museums with collections that include works of art of exceptional quality from virtually every culture and time period. Areas of notable depth include Oceanic art, pre-Columbian art, ancient Chinese bronzes and European and American art of the late 19th and 20th centuries, with particular strength in 20th-century German art. The Museum offers a full range of exhibitions and educational programming generated independently and in collaboration with local, national and international partners. Admission to the Saint Louis Art Museum is free to all every day.

### LETTERS BY AND TO VINCENT VAN GOGH

From 9 October 2009 to 3 January 2010 the **Van Gogh Museum's** (Amsterdam) Rietveld building will be devoted to the letters of Vincent van Gogh. In the exhibition Van



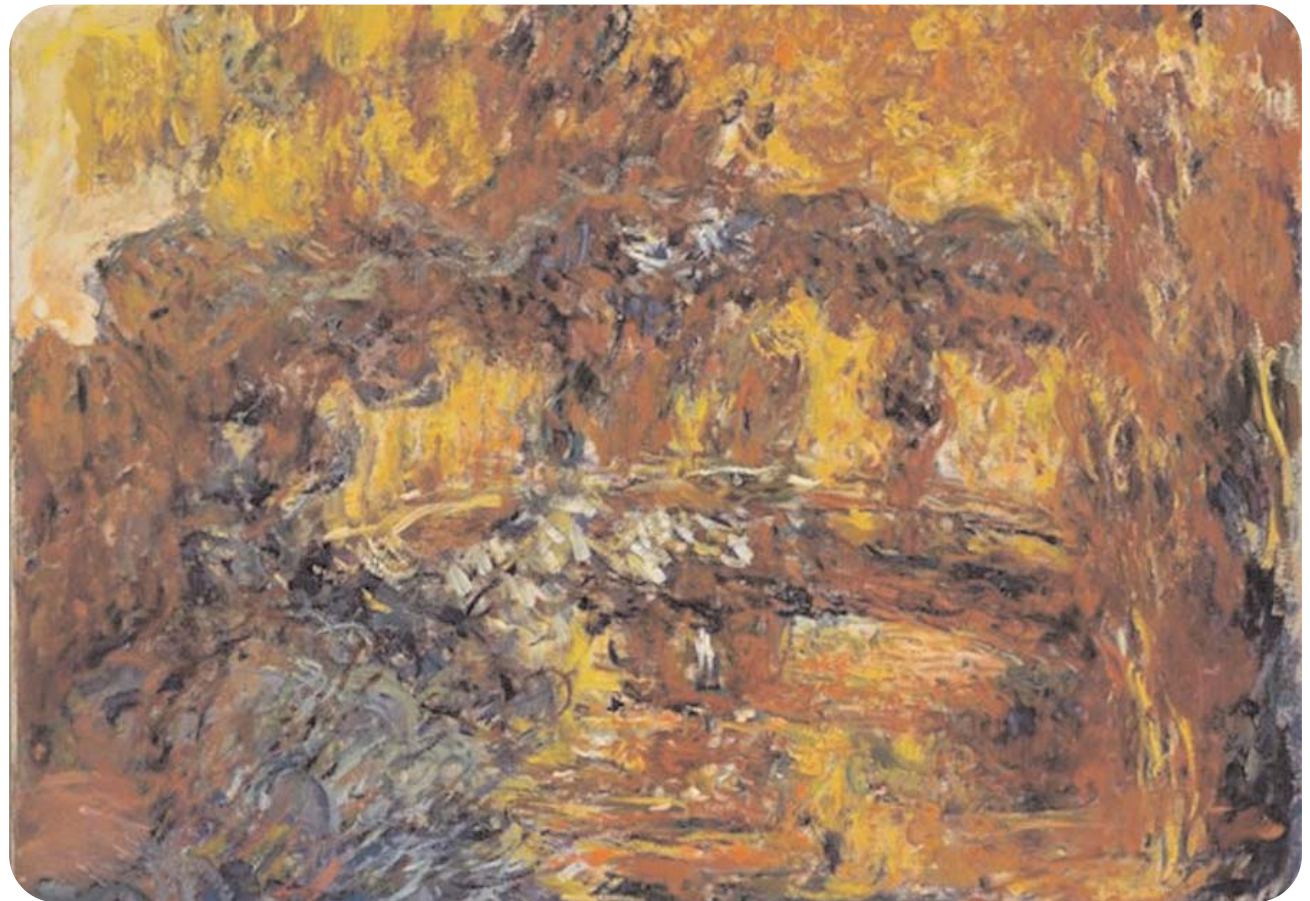
Gogh's letters. The artist speaks, some 120 original letters will be exhibited alongside the works that Van Gogh was writing about. The important documents are seldom or never on show to the public due to their extreme fragility

and sensitivity to light. The combination of more than 340 works, from the rich collection of the Van Gogh Museum, including paintings, drawings, letters and letter sketches offers a multifaceted and penetrating view of Van Gogh as letter writer and as artist.

The exhibition offers a unique opportunity to compare the sketches in the letters to the paintings and drawings on which they are based. Van Gogh's own writing and his intimate sketches allow the visitor to look over the artist's shoulder, as it were. Never before have we been able to come so close to Van Gogh as an artist and as a person. The visitor is witness to his dreams and disappointments, friendships and fights, the battle against his illness and his all-consuming passion to create art able to withstand the test of time. Quotations from his letters guide the visitor through his paintings and those of his contemporaries, offering insights into Van Gogh's views on art and the role of the artist. By far the most of the letters are addressed to his younger brother Theo, who supported him morally and financially during the ten years of his artistic career. As such the close bond between the brothers is one of the exhibition's important themes. Vincent viewed his artistic vocation as a joint venture and apprised Theo of all his plans and all the developments in his art.

### **MONET'S ICONIC WATER LILIES**

The **High Museum of Art**, Atlanta, will present an exhibition of four masterpieces by Claude Monet from the collection of The **Museum of Modern Art** (MoMA), New York, beginning June 6. The installation will feature MoMA's renowned 42-foot-wide triptych, "Reflections of Clouds on the Water-Lily



Claude Monet, French, 1840-1926, "The Japanese Footbridge" [Le Pont japonais]. c. 1920-22, Oil on canvas. 35 1/4 x 45 7/8" (89.5 x 116.3 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Grace Rainey Rogers Fund

Pond," which is the largest "Water Lilies" painting in the U.S. The High's presentation of "Monet Water Lilies" launches a multi-year, multi-exhibition collaboration between the High and MoMA, with additional exhibitions currently under development for 2011 through 2013.

"Monet Water Lilies" will also include another monumental painting of the water lilies in the Japanese-style pond that Monet cultivat-

ed on his property in Giverny, France ("Water Lilies," c. 1920, 6' 6 1/2" x 19' 7 1/2"), as well as "The Japanese Footbridge" (c. 1920-22) and "Agapanthus" (1918-19), depicting the majestic plants bordering the pond. The paintings portray Monet's flower garden and water lily ponds at his home in Giverny, France. The exhibition will be on view through August 23, 2009. <http://tinyurl.com/m4sffm>