

UPSIDE DOWN DRAWING

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MATERIALS NEEDED

- -Paper
- -Pencils
- -Visuals for class, whether drawn from this tutorial or supplemented by you or your director.
- 9" x 12" Envelopes (OPTIONAL-See Exercises: Helpful Hints" pages 6-9) (Can be substituted by another sheet of paper heavy enough to not see through, and/or construction paper)

Drawing not only develops hand-eye coordination, it teaches one to really observe, to see, as nothing else ever will. -Nancy Marculewicz, printmaker and artist

Tutor: So, in Week 1, we learned about OiLS. What does this stand for?

[Class: Ovals, dots, lines, angles, curves, while you put the OiLS poster on the board, table, whatever]

Last week, we did mirror image drawing which was one way to help break down what sort of simplified mind pattern?

[Class: Breaking down mental icon patterns]

Tutor: This week, we are going to draw something upside down. The drawing you will be copying will be upside down and your drawing of it will be upside down too. Only when you are done will you turn both right side up again.

This is another technique you can use to break your brain's icon making machine inside your head, so you can more easily see the OiLS which actually build an image.

<Show the Green Dragon Inn image>

Have you even looked at the world upside down, seen the ceiling as the floor and the floor as the ceiling? Have you ever noticed how different the world looks when it's upside down? When the books float in the shelves against the new "ceiling"? have you ever seen things in a new way because things are opposite of our "normal", even though you're so familiar with the room the way us usually is?

<Eleanor of Aquitaine Upside Down.>

It happens in art too. Take this image, for example. What do you think this is? Can you easily read the names on the paper? What do you think this is?

This is a copy of a painting of Eleanor of Aquitaine, mother of Richard the I of England, the Lionheart. Did you quickly read her name, or did you have to work a little harder? IF you ever read upside down, [Ask the parents to confirm this] you'll probably find that it takes you a little longer to read the same words, because you have to slow down so the brain can process words that, upside up, are easy for us. That's because the brain saw something familiar, but in a different way, and therefore, had to slow down to say, "What is that?"

In a drawing, upside down, even though we KNOW it's the same image, our brain has trouble quickly iconing the image into too-simple patterns, and it starts to sort through the lines piece by piece. Just like reading upside down might cause us (or our parents) to read more slowly because the letters look a little strange

What is the point to this week's exercise?

Like last week, this exercise is about hampering the Local-Logic thinking mode and letting Global-Gestalt take over (GG is better at this anyway...)

Local-Logic likes streamlined processes which are "good enough" to get the job done. This is a good thing for many things in life, but in drawing, especially when we're learning to draw, we need to do something else.

Global-Gestalt likes to take longer, really look, to play with lines and form and things. That's all we're doing here, forcing Local-Logic to sit down because there ISN'T a way to do this fast.

Ironically, once you start seeing the world the way an artist sees it, and your drawing technique becomes more assured and confident, Local-Logic will step up beside Global-Gestalt and they'll work together!

After decades of drawing, if you looked over my shoulder, you'd see I don't have to block everything completely out (the way I train someone) —but that's because I can "see" blocking in my mind's eye. Local-Logic has helped me see and catalog "shortcuts" to drawing over the years. Likewise, I rarely have to do exercises like Week 2 and 3 because I already see the world this way. But to begin with, we just need to help our "mind's eye" along, and that means forcibly slowing our brain down.

Week 3: Upside Down Drawing, Abecedarians and Apprentices

upside down, so an upside down person, or animal, or face, is just strange enough we can more easily see things differently.

Doing exercises like this forces us, like last week, to be more observant, but drawing upside down also increases our problem solving and spatial reasoning. How long *is* that line? What *is* the space between this area, and that one?

Now, take a look at this portrait [*Show the Picasso-Stravinsky portrait--you may have to wait until the laughter subsides*]. This is a *very* famous portrait of Igor Stravinsky, drawing my Pablo Picasso, an artist who we will meet in Cycle 3.¹ This portrait is probably the single-most famous “draw-upside-down-model” in the world. Art students have done this in schools all over for decades. If you’re interested in this model, give it a try! ²

So today, we’re going to be drawing pictures that are upside down. Like last week, we’re trying to slow the brain down long enough that we truly SEE the OiLS that make up an image, not just what we *THINK* make up the image. Drawing upside down also increases our problem solving and spatial reasoning. How long *is* that line? What *is* the space between this area, and that one?

One word of warning: this is an exercise where blocking-forming the large shapes first, then focusing on details-isn’t your friend. Work line-by-line as best you can, and even if your final image runs off the paper, that’s okay. The process of working upside down will teach you more than having a perfect result.

Select your image, and place it, upside down, next to your paper so you can easily see it while drawing, then draw. Chose where you want to start: some people prefer to start in an upper corner, some in the upper edge, some, in the middle of the paper! Copy each line and shape one-by-one, and try to make each OiLS element to match as closely as you can.

And if you make (what you think is) a mistake, don’t panic. Just think of this guy-one of the most well-known painting instructors of the 20th Century:

“There are no mistakes, only happy accidents.” -Bob Ross

Review time:

What are OiLS and what do they stand for? <*Building blocks of art, Ovals, Dots, [straight] lines, angled lines, curves*>

Learning anything, including drawing, is about? <*Process and Progress, not Product*>

¹ If you have Cycle 3’s Artists and Composer cards, you might want to show the Stravinsky Card (Card #39)

² **Please note**, this portrait is in the public domain in the United States ONLY. If you are teaching outside US jurisdiction, this portrait may need to be shown from a book which acquired permission to print it. Students can then use the book’s example in their own exercise.)

Exercise:

(There're really no exercise 1 and 2, since the only difference between any exercise is the source material, the procedure is identical)

These images are partially on our history sentence, plus a couple of familiar extras:

- Eleanor of Aquitaine, 13th century drawing
- Richard the Lionhearted in battle, 13th century illuminated painting.
- Seated lion
- Medieval Lion Passant
- Happy Lamb
- Happy Lion
- The Stravinsky drawing

If you'd rather use your own patterns, anything will do, but the best patterns for this exercise will be black-and-white drawings with minimum shading. (In fact, coloring pages from any coloring book would be ideal!)

Hand out, or have students select their pattern. Some sources suggest taping the model upside down so the drawing student is not tempted to turn it right side up to "correct" it.

Unlike most techniques, where blocking out the entire composition before filling in the details is recommended, this technique is not generally recommended for this exercise. (Just like week 2, you want to avoid saying "the flower/hand/tree goes here..." you want, instead, to think to yourself "this straight line goes here....this one starts half way long the line and curves this way...")

Proportional distortion can (and will) happen. (If you're doing the Picasso portrait-at least distortion is built in!) Since you are filling the canvas with "random" lines and shapes, it frequently helps to start in one location and work out from there.

The point to this exercise is to exercise looking at lines, curves, and proportions, which will, surprisingly, frequently lead to a better-than-you'd-expect result!

Also recommended: keeping the model and the canvas the same size, so the student doesn't have to translate size as well as location.

Helpful Hints:

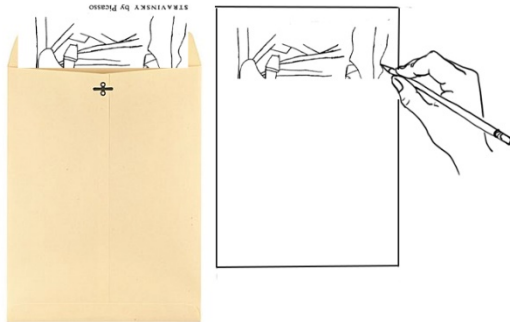


Figure 1 First Stage

This exercise can be altered slightly by either inserting the original image into a large manila envelope, and/or covering the image with another sheet of paper. Pull out (or uncover) only the top 2-3" of the original image, then sketch only those lines onto the blank paper. (see Figure 1 below).

When you've transferred all those lines, uncover the next 2-3". (See Figure 2) (Left handers will have to set this up in a mirror image, see Figure 3)

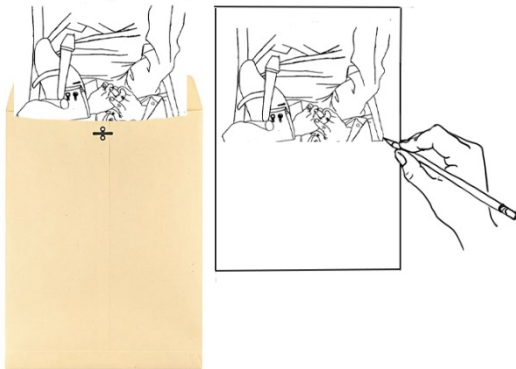


Figure 2

This further forces the brain to break the whole image into even more non-sensical parts, which force-breaks the icon-patterns, and your brain cannot help BUT see the OiLS of these images.

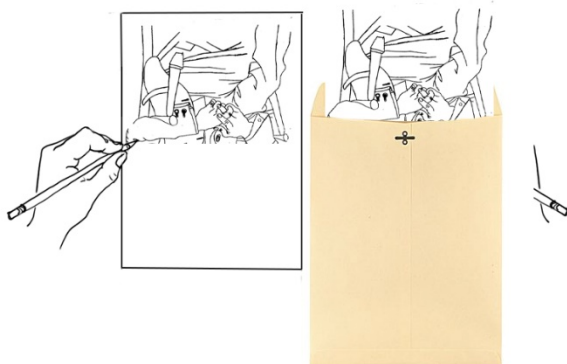


Figure3: The left-handed student set up

You can also use this technique with a blank sheet of paper (it needs to be thick enough you cannot see the hidden lines through it) and you can also move the paper to the right or the left as well as up and down. (See figures 4-6)

Be sure to align your blank sheet to the same size as your handedness, so you do not cover the original image while you copy it.

The only reason to do any of these is to force your brain to stop picking out the pre-set images and see instead the actual lines that make up the image.

Week 3: Upside Down Drawing, Abecedarians and Apprentices

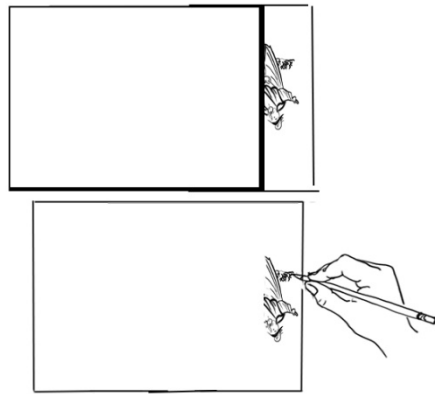


Figure 4: One way to use the blank sheet of paper and move it over sideways as you draw. (The image is still upside-down, and you are drawing it upside-down, but it is being revealed from side-to-side. This is also how you would use an envelope in conjunction with a horizontal image. (For example, the simple lion laying down)

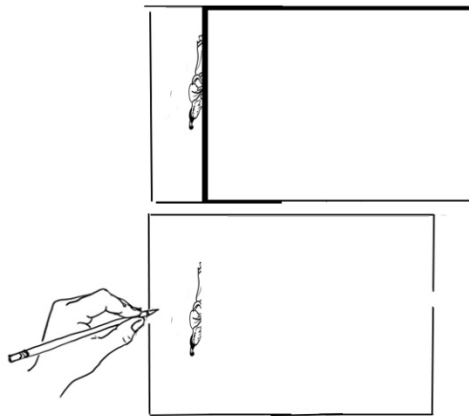


Figure 5: For left-handers with a horizontal image and a blank sheet of paper they can move sideways, this would be the set-up. Again, this is a good set up for using an envelope with a horizontal original with a left-handed student.

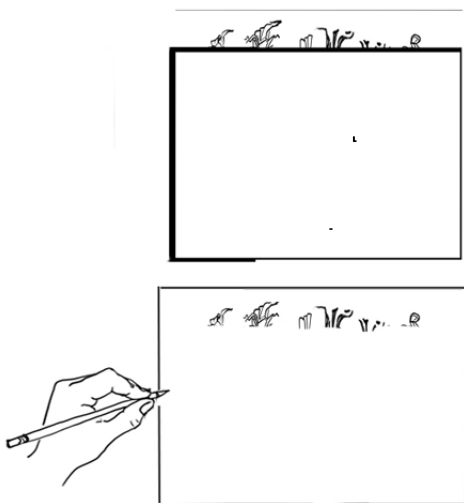


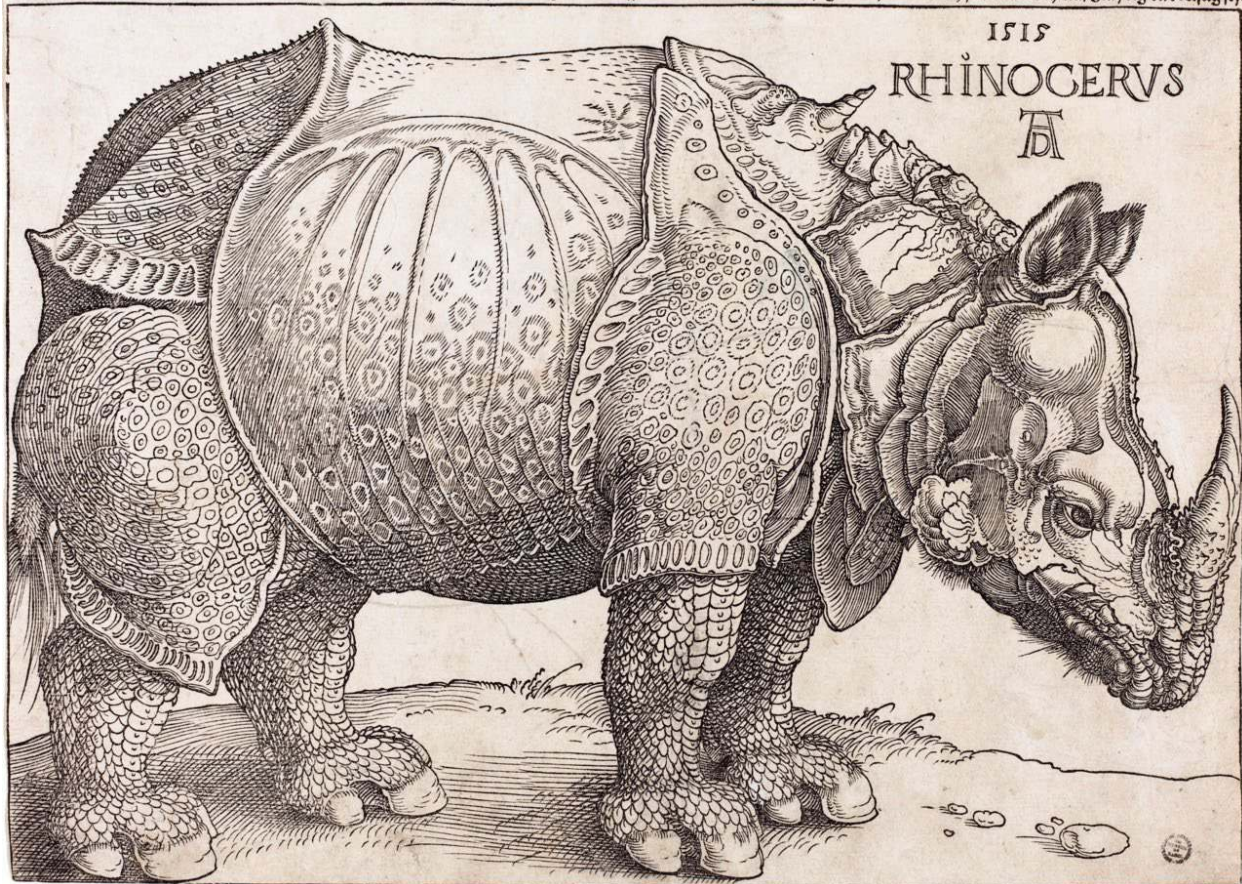
Figure 6 This is how you can set up a blank sheet of paper and reveal the image from the top (bottom of the original) and move the blank sheet down. You can set it up vertically as shown for either a left or right-handed student, or you can move the original to the side opposite the student's drawing hand, and lower the blank sheet as they complete the sections of the image.

Additional Resources

This sort of drawing really tests your spatial measuring. No one gets it perfect without practice (and even then, we all have bad days!)

Engravers like Durer, who we studied in Cycle 1, have to do a variation of this whenever they make a plate. Any words have to be reversed, and they have to engrave the plate the reverse of how they want it to turn out (ex. Durer's rhinoceros (see below) faces to the right, and the words are formed in the upper right hand corner. Durer had to think all the OILS out BACKWARDS and write the word "Rhinocerus" in the upper left hand corner, forming each letter mirrored to its correct orientation.

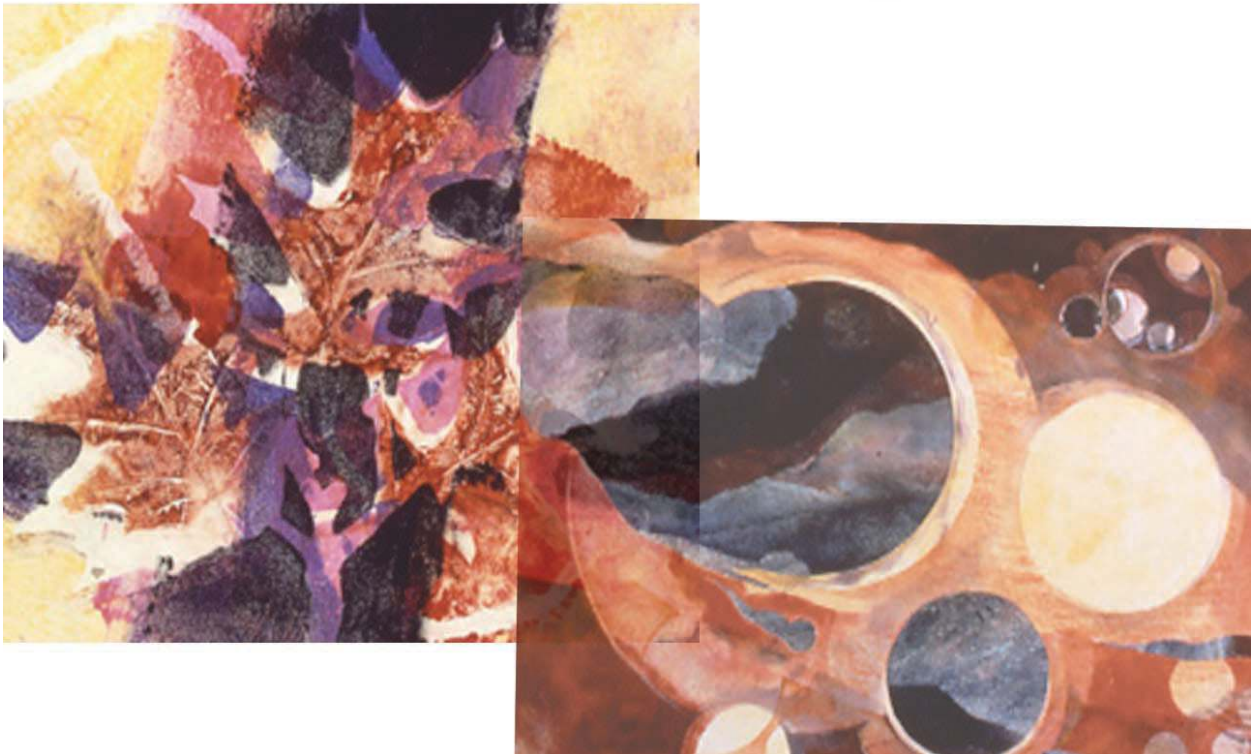
Nach Christus gepurt. 1513. Jar. 26. i. May. Hat man dem grosmechtigen Kunig von Portugall Emannel gen Kysabona pacht auf India/ ein sollich lebendig Thier. Das nennet sie Rhinocerus. Das ist hie mit aller seiner gestalt abgedruckt. Es hat ein farb wie ein gepackte Schildkrot. Und ist vñ dicken Schalen vberlegt fast fest. Und ist in der groß als der Selsande Aber nydertrachtiger von paynen/ vnd fast weh afftig. Es hat ein scharff starck Horn vom auff der nase/ Das begyndt es alweg zu wegen wo es bey staynen ist. Das dösige Thier ist des Selsfangs todt feynde. Der Selsfande fürcht es fast vñel/ dann wo es In ankumbe/ so laufft In das Thier mit dem kopff zwischen dyc so idem payn/ vnd reyst den Selsfande vnden am pauch auff vñ erwürgt In/ des mag er sich nit erwehren. Dann das Thier ist also gewapent/ das In der Selsfande nichts kan thun. Sie sagen auch das der Rhinocerus Schnell/ Fraydig vnd Listig sey.



Weeks 2 and 3 are two different techniques which help do the same thing: help your brain to divorce the parts of an image from the whole so you can put it back together on paper.

Drawing not only develops hand-eye coordination, it teaches one to really observe, to see, as nothing else ever will.

-Nancy Marculewicz, printmaker, author, and art professor

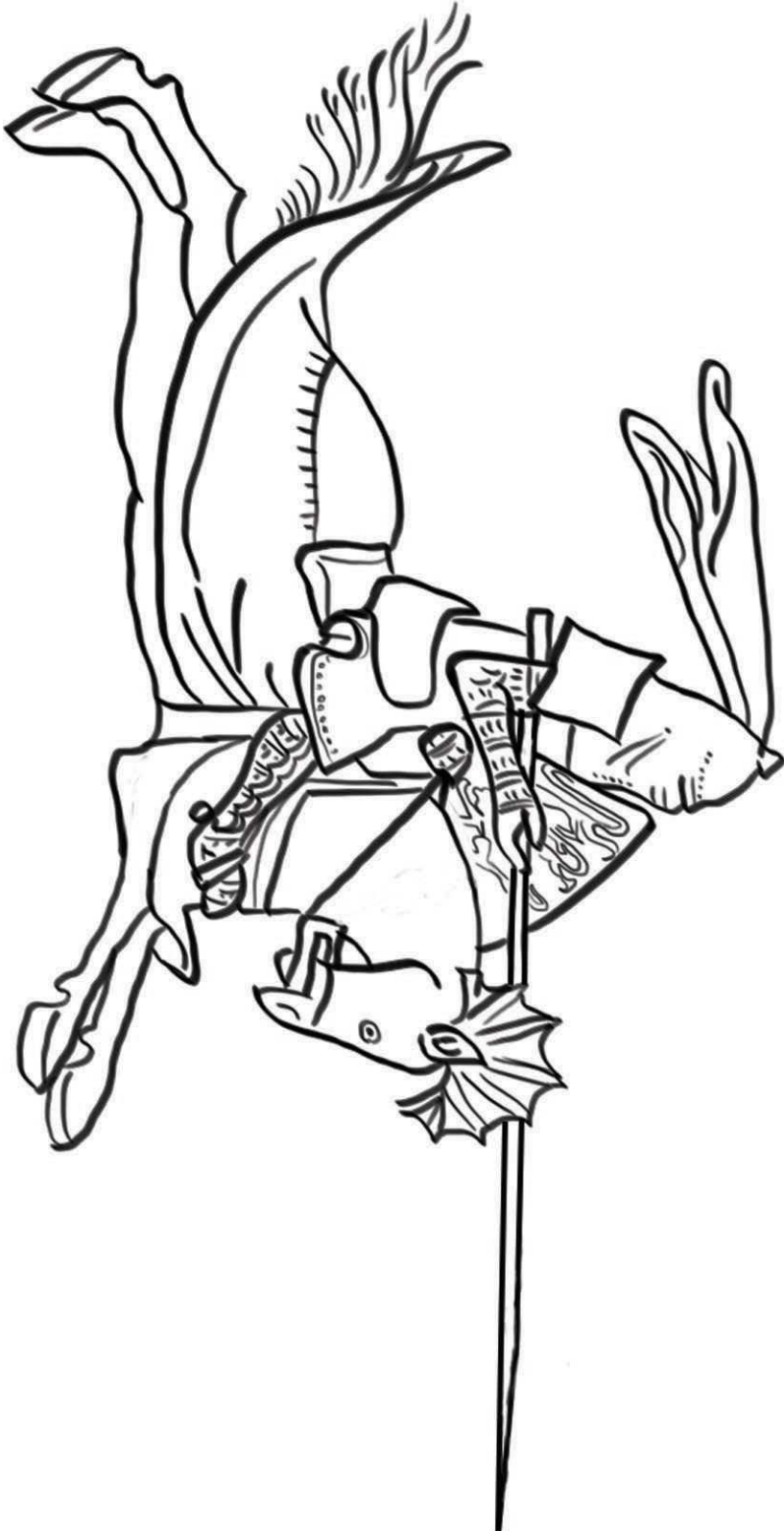


There are no
mistakes, only
happy
accidents.

—Bob Ross
American painter and teacher
(1942 - 1995)



King Richard I, Lionheart, fighting a battle in the 3rd Crusade



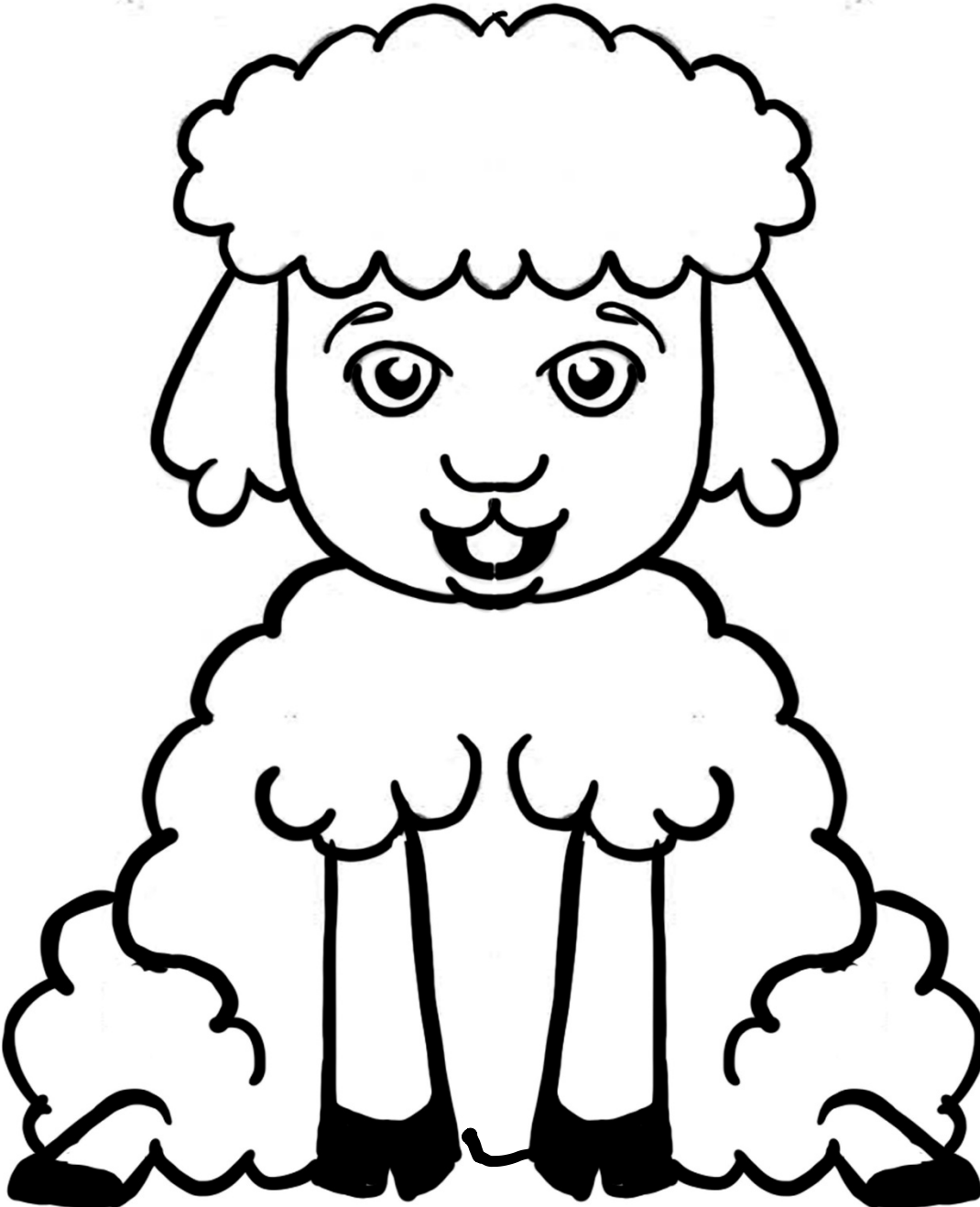


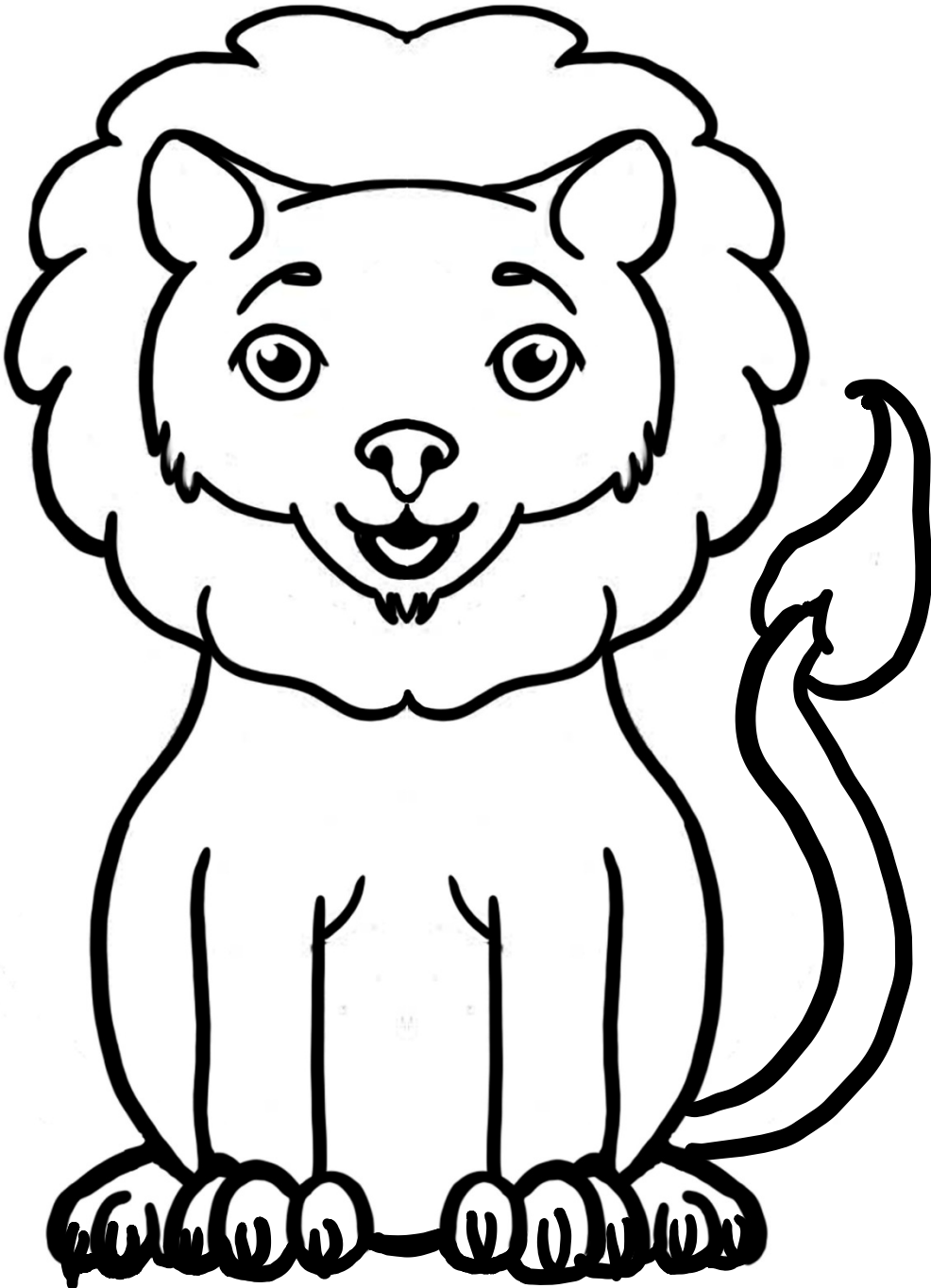
The Lion Passant - the symbol of Richard I of England...now part of the Royal Coat of Arms of England





Eleanor of Aquitaine







STRAVINSKY by Picasso

Public domain in the USA. Created and first published ca. 1920

Take Home Suggestions:

If this technique really worked for you and your students, they can continue during the week.

Some of the best and easiest sources for the drawing upside down technique is coloring books, approximately 8.5 X 11 (You want to keep the blank page approximately the same size as the original image so if you're using printer paper (or printer sized paper) to draw on, you want to find original images that are the same approximate size. The best examples for drawing upside down are going to be strong black and white images with a minimum of shading. Coloring books fits that bill very nicely.

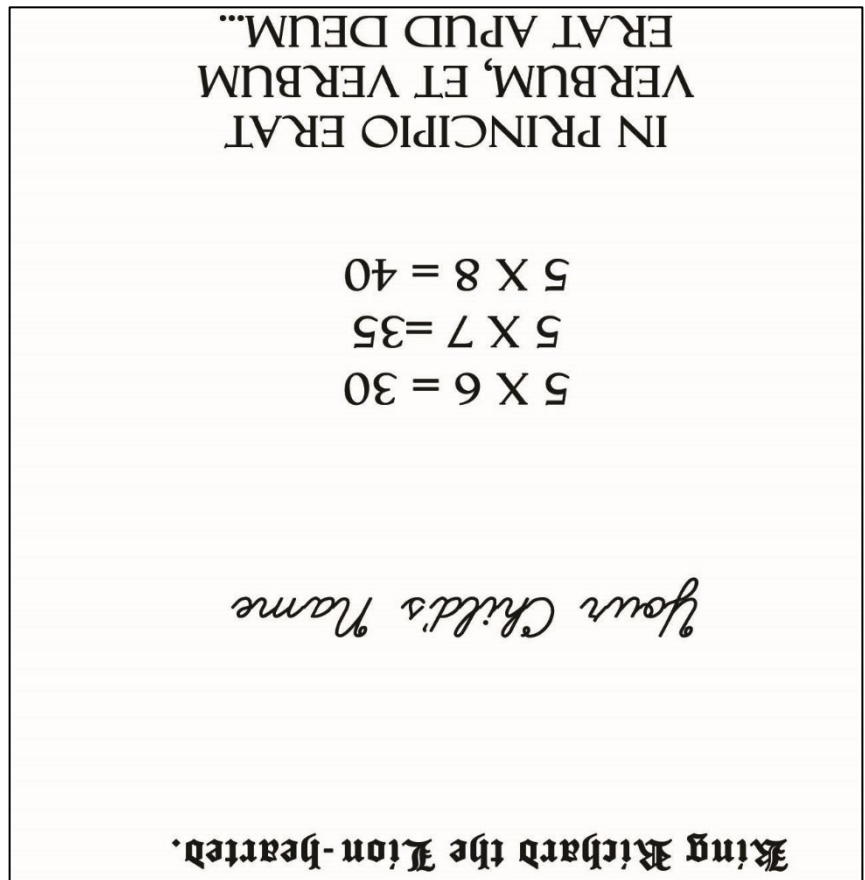
When doing the upside down image, try not to think in terms of objects, like "the nose goes here, the house goes there" because your brain will try to use its "icon patterns" to fill that in, and you may not look as closely at the actual marks which make up the original image.

Write Upside down!

Writing is actually just one form of drawing (and in fact, it's a perfect example of icon-pattern drawing used in a good way!)

Write something in large letters on a sheet of paper (or print off some large-sized quotations) and flip it upside down. Then try to match the writing, stroke for stroke, upside down. This will have the same impact on your brain as drawing an image upside down.

Try it again using print, cursive, or even fancy calligraphic script. For an added twist, try something in a foreign language! (*In principio erat Verbum...* Latin AND Art, all at once!)



(If, however, your child is still writing his or her letters backwards or rotated, you may wish to skip this exercise variation for now...feel free to try it yourself though!)