

# Understanding Talent



## Insight into myths about art and artists

This resource has eight sections:

- You DO have Talent!
- Talent has No Deadline
- You Can Learn to Draw
- The Joy of Creating Art
- Drawing is Seeing
- Drawings are Your Gifts
- Discover Your Inner Artist
- Start Drawing Today!

Figure 1: A drawing from many years ago



## ArtSpeak

**Talent:** A process of self-discovery throughout which artists acknowledge their interest and motivation to become exceptional in a specific area.

**Artist:** A person who practices one or more art disciplines (such as dance, music, theater, writing, or visual arts).

**Drawing:** (noun) The image that results from the application of a medium to a surface. A drawing defines an artist's choice of subjects from his or her own unique perspective. (verb) The process of applying a medium to a surface to create an image.

**Art:** (also called *artwork*) An artistic creation in any art discipline (such as dance, music, theater, writing, or visual arts) by an artist who begins with an idea and ends with an original work of art.

Thankfully, nobody ever told me I couldn't draw.  
Then again, nobody ever told me I could draw.

As an introverted child, I was oblivious to the meaning of the word "talent". Drawing entertained me for hours and provided me with something everybody needs – a sense of being special.

The respect and praise of a friend, relative, or teacher gave me a boost of self-confidence and increased my yearning to improve my drawing skills.

However, growing up in the small town of Corner Brook, Newfoundland, it was sometimes difficult to access the information necessary to improve these skills.

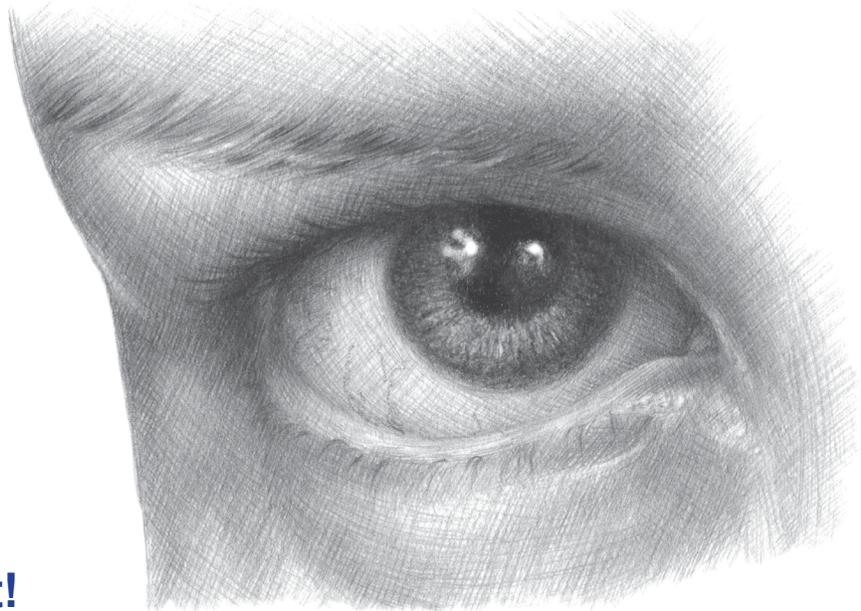
Our small public library became a serendipitous haven. I spent many hours devouring everything I could find about art – from children’s picture books, to encyclopedias with photographs of art by the Great Masters. I was rarely without inspiration or subject material for drawing.

My greatest love was drawing faces. I thrived on the challenge of being able to draw likenesses of friends and celebrities.

This early interest in faces ultimately brought me beyond the frustrations of self-education into a very rewarding and diverse career in art.

By the time I discovered that many people believe “drawing” is very difficult or requires a special talent, I was already well on my way to becoming a technically skilled artist.

Figure 2



## You DO have Talent!

“Talent” is a word often misunderstood.

Talented artists are often presented to us through movies, television, and media as magical and mysterious eccentrics. In the art world, you often hear critics hailing such things as random blobs of paint on a canvas, digital accidents, or even human excrement as “great works of art.”

If you’re anything like me, you struggle to understand this art. You’re often left scratching your head, amused and puzzled. The critics encourage you to believe that these artworks are the result of “extraordinary talent”. No wonder so many people believe that talent itself is magical, elusive, and not within the grasp of mere mortals such as us!

There will always be artists who rely on shock value to achieve recognition, and the bizarre or zany stuff is usually great for a few giggles. However, the general population seems to respect artists who demonstrate strong technical skills in their style of choice, whether representational, impressionistic, or abstract.

Talent is simply a process of self-discovery in which individuals acknowledge their interest and motivation to become exceptional in a specific area.

## Talent has No Deadline

Everyone progresses at their own individual pace.

Drawing is as natural a human activity as learning to walk or talk. From the ancient caves of prehistoric humans to the tombs of Egyptian and Native peoples all over the world, we have found evidence that humans used art to communicate and immortalize events and objects precious to their lives and cultures.

The creators of these ancient artworks were probably not disparaged by self-doubt – they made art because it was the natural thing to do.

From the beginnings of recorded history to modern day, prodigies have been considered to be persons who acquire a special ability with little effort, and talent is understood by many to only include these prodigies.

Most people become prodigies by obsessively working to develop their skills when they are very young.

By continuing to challenge themselves, they discover their ability to transcend to extraordinary levels of technical competence.

While not everyone is a prodigy, everyone can develop talent.

You are a unique individual with diverse abilities.

Be patient with yourself: drawing skills develop over time.

Talent must be nurtured and developed. If your dream is to be a talented artist, you need to be true to yourself. Hard work, patience and devotion inevitably challenge a mediocre artist to become an exceptional artist.

Figure 3



Sadly, the world is full of talented people who never pursue that which they love, because they understand talent to be some magical, elusive quality.

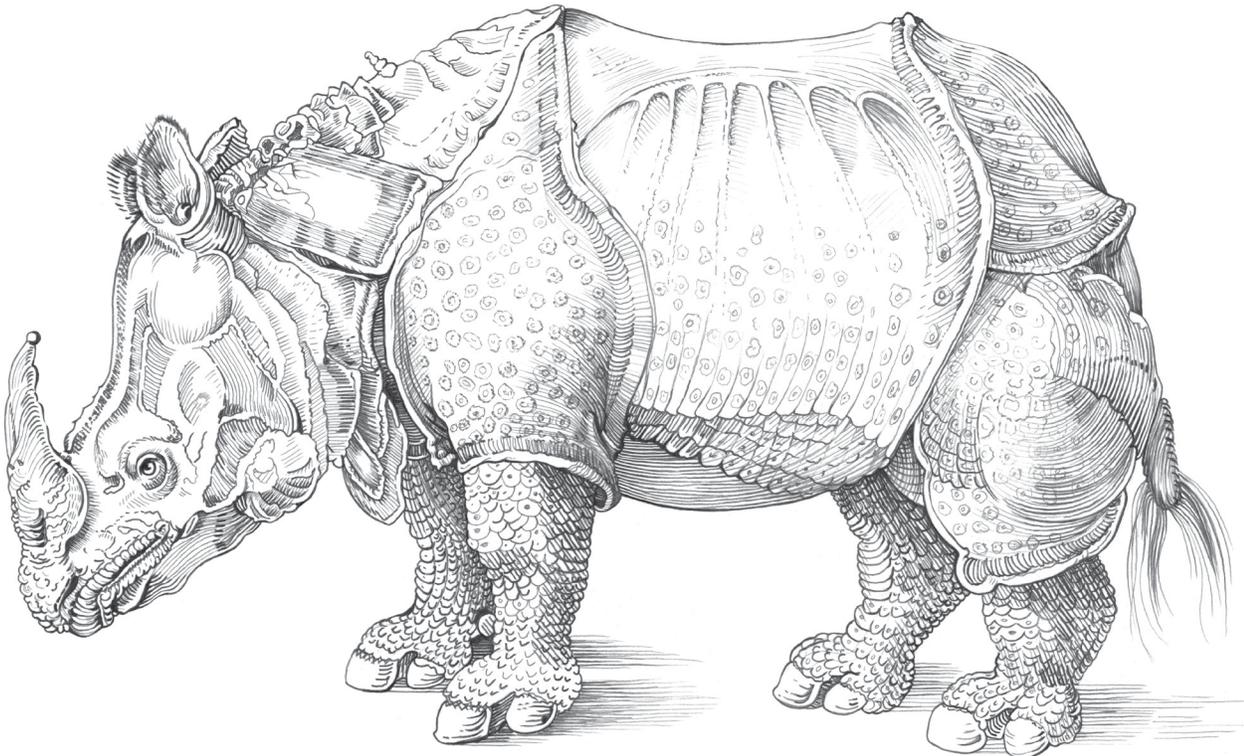
Many people arrive at the conclusion that talent is only available to individuals who were born with it. I disagree; I wasn't "born" an artist. With the help of various books, I taught myself how to draw – and you can, too! Continue to explore and nurture your desire to draw using the talent we all possess.

## You Can Learn to Draw

Most individuals are capable of developing superior skills in specific areas. Many persons, including individuals challenged by visual, physical, and mental limitations, enjoy drawing. Luckily, I can see and have hands. Some people without hands have become successful artists by accepting the challenge of using their mouth or feet to hold their drawing tools.

If you have some vision and a way to hold a pencil, the only obstacle left is making a commitment. With a better understanding of talent and ability, you begin to recognize that drawing can be one of your special skills.

Figure 4



Drawing means something different to everyone. It can mean the dictionary definition, or your own nonspecific definition, such as: *The applying of an art medium to a surface so as to produce a visual image*. These words, however, don't define drawing as it personally relates to you.

What comes to *your* mind when you think of the word “drawing”? How do you define this word? Put on your thinking cap for a moment, and finish the following sentence:

To me, drawing is \_\_\_\_\_.

With interest, patience and commitment, you can become as good at drawing as you wish. The most important thing is that you are communicating through and nurturing the artist within you by actually drawing and making art.

## The Joy of Creating Art

The joy of drawing is in the process, not the product. Learning to draw adds a new and exciting activity to your life.

Figure 5



Figure 6



The joy and personal satisfaction of creating a drawing is both your incentive and reward.

The process of discovering this ability is enriching to all aspects of your life – as a means of expressing yourself, the language of art is a relaxing, stimulating and productive method of communication.

Your drawings illustrate your personal perceptions.

Drawing challenges you to translate what you see into a non-verbal language. With only a few supplies and some basic skills, you soon find yourself taking pride in your new achievements.

## Drawing is Seeing

As an artist, you appreciate everything around you from new perspectives. You visually explore with a whole new purpose: discovering drawing subjects!

Drawing is more than simply rendering a specific object – it's also visually defining your choice of subject from your own unique perspective.

No other person in the whole world is exactly like you and can see what you see.

Figure 7



## Drawings are Your Gifts

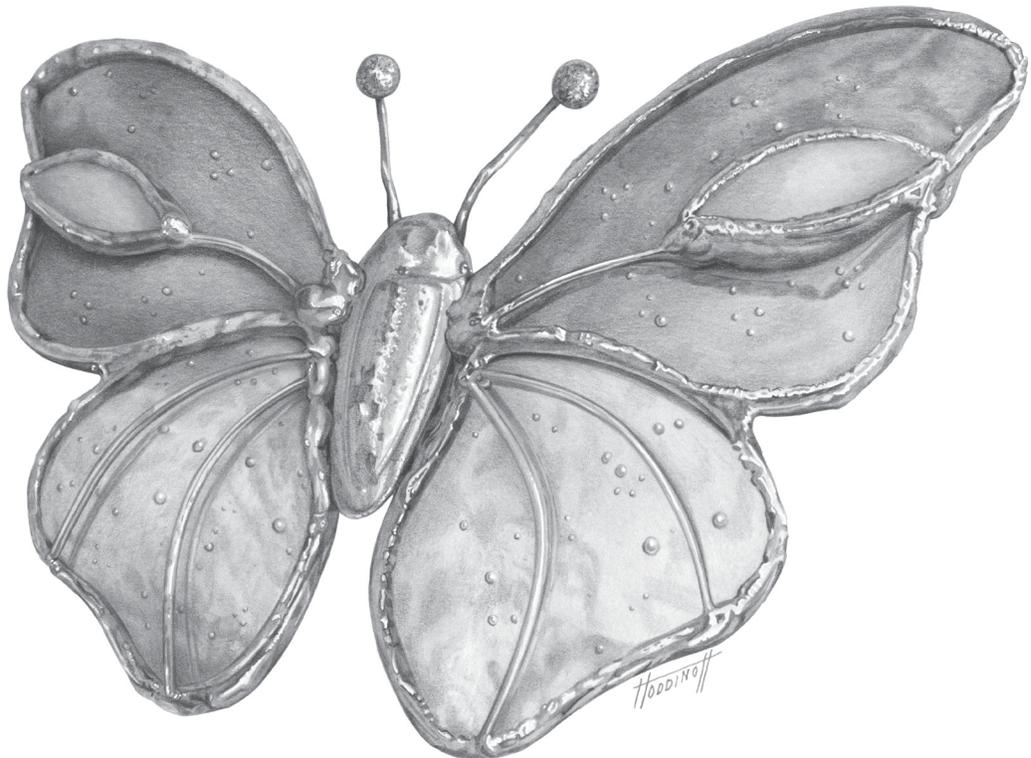
The act of drawing produces a physical reward: art.

It really doesn't matter why you draw or who sees your drawings.

Maybe you hope to one day publicly exhibit your drawings, or you may prefer to only share them with family and friends.

You can also keep your drawings all to yourself.

Figure 8



Your drawings serve as a journal of your artistic journey. Have you ever thought about writing a book? Why not use your own drawings to illustrate your literary art?

You can also use your drawings to decorate your surroundings with your own personal touch. Have some of your drawings framed and hang them in your home or workspace.

Family, co-workers, and friends easily become quite fascinated by artistic creations. Don't be surprised if they soon request some of your drawings for their own homes. Of course, this is a good time to encourage them to take up drawing themselves.

Figure 9



## Discover Your Inner Artist

Draw in a way you really love.

Every artist seems to have a unique approach to drawing.

Some love big, bold, loose drawings; while others like little tiny drawings with lots of intricate details.

Many artists choose to not label their drawings with a style.

Your personal style evolves each time you attempt new and diverse methods of drawing, so keep an open mind while carefully noting which of your drawings you prefer.

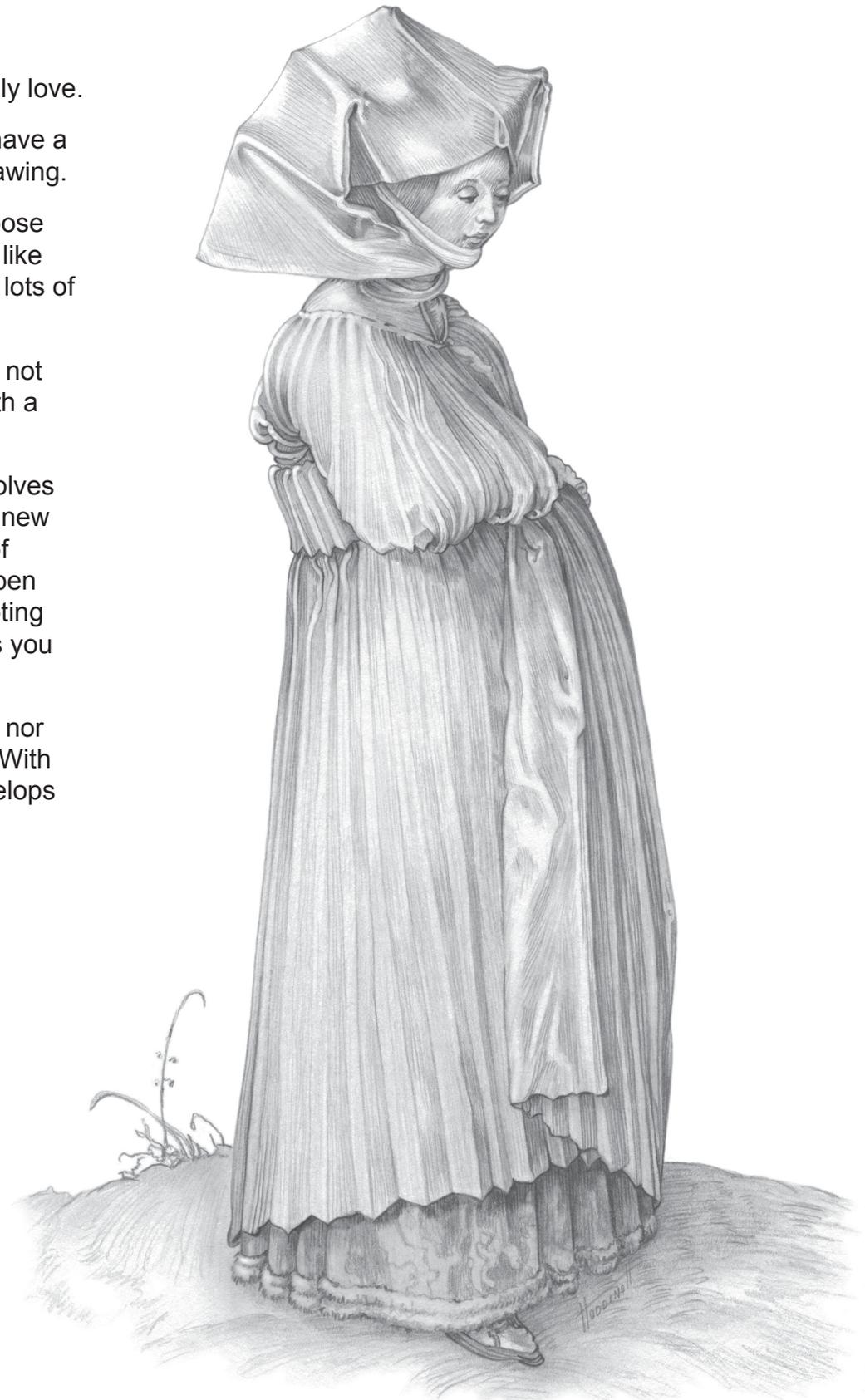
Styles are neither right nor wrong... they just are. With time, your style(s) develops automatically.

## Start Drawing Today!

You have already taken the first step!

Just by reading this, you are already on your way to becoming an artist.

Figure 10



Perceived personal limitations are not obstacles; your only real challenge is making a commitment.

For most of my adult life, I have chosen to share my love of art with both children and adults by teaching art.

Whether it is your desire to learn the very basics of drawing or to improve the drawing skills you already have, Drawspace tutorials will likely have something of interest to you.

Art has become very accessible in recent years – galleries, the Internet, art books, and your own community provide vast art resources.

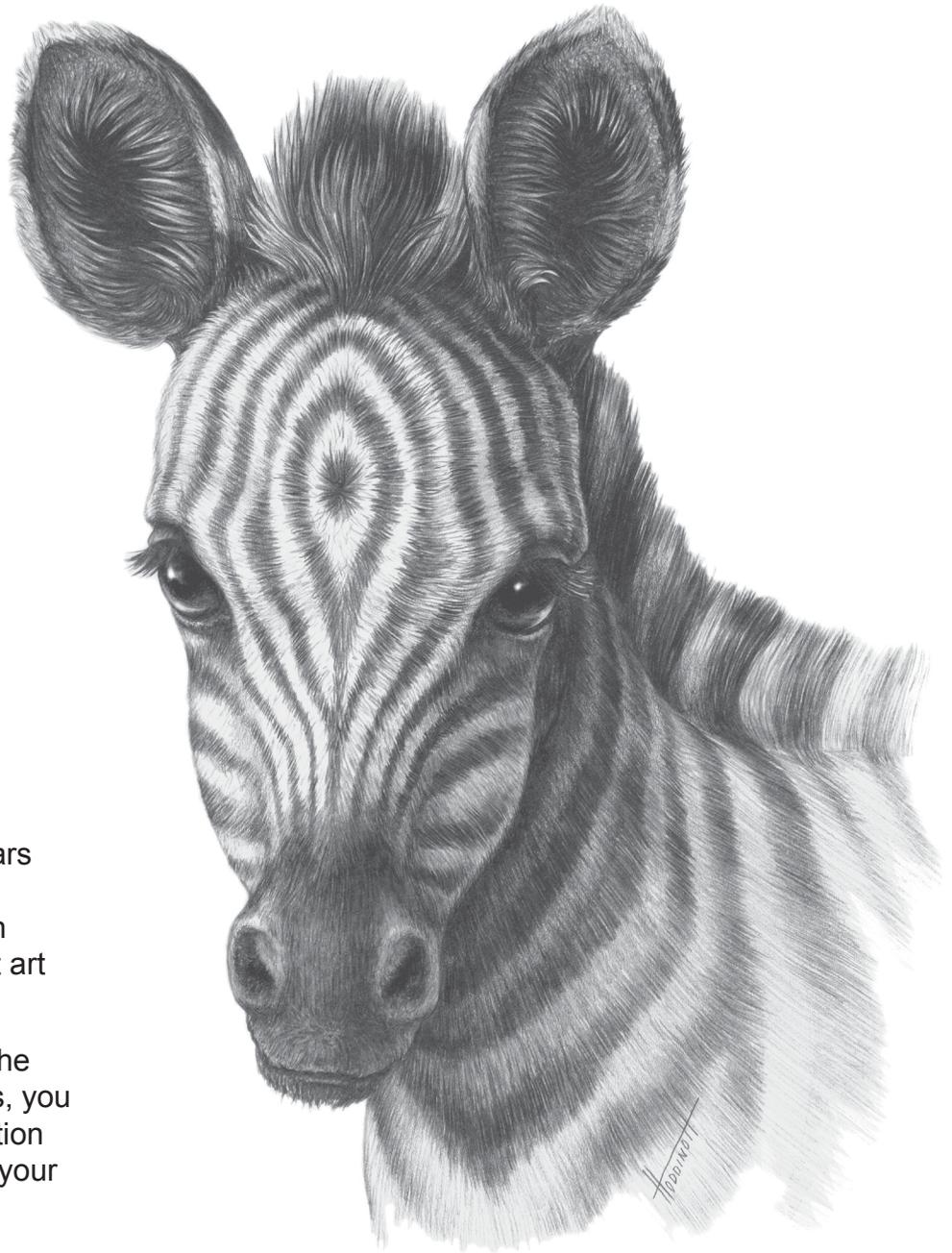
By carefully observing the drawings of other artists, you gain invaluable information which you can apply to your own drawings.

Take time to examine and appreciate a diverse range of art and artists.

Investigate and participate in some of the wonderful drawing e-groups where international artists share tips, critique one another's work, and openly exchange various art techniques and resources.

Check out your local community-based educational facilities and recreational centers for drawing programs in your area. You can always benefit from drawing classes and workshops where you'll meet others within your community who also want to improve their drawing skills, techniques, and styles.

Figure 11



As you uncover local art resources, you'll meet diverse artists and have opportunities to become involved in art groups.

Many art groups organize incredible workshops taught by prominent artists, and the camaraderie and enjoyment is well worth your time.

With an interest in self-expression, you CAN develop exceptional drawing skills.

Figure 12

