

Warm Up Three: Diagonal Directions

Time involved: 3 to 5 minutes

Materials: A piece of paper and a pencil or pen

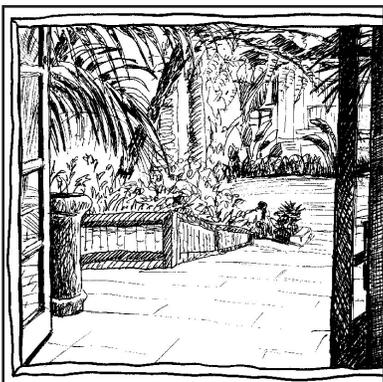
Oh boy. Diagonal is a really different direction. What's the big deal? Here is the big deal. A 2-dimensional surface (piece of paper or canvas) is flat. You are not reading these lessons to be able to draw a line on paper. You can already do that. You want to learn how to draw lines that tell a story, that draw people into your work of art. And to do this you need to pay close attention to the nature of the diagonal directions you see. Your point of view is the key here. A horizontal direction can be a diagonal direction from another point of view. For example, look at the top or bottom of a closed door straight on and then open the door a little bit.

The diagonal direction is the key to creating a sense of depth. Diagonals are everywhere (roof tops, table tops, door frames, telephone pole wires going down the street, roads). Diagonal feels divergent. Characteristics include exploding out, being drawn into, depth, attracting, distance.

So in Lesson Three you are going to look for and draw diagonal directions. Continue to stay away from hard lines and perfection seeking. Contemplate the characteristics.

The Diagonal Directions Exercise

1. Sit still for one minute. Close your eyes and take in 3 slow breaths.
2. Open your eyes and gaze softly at the world before you. Notice diagonal directions.
3. Choose one that feels easy to draw.
4. Gently place your pencil on the paper and move it the same general direction as the diagonal edge you are looking at. It may feel odd at first. That's OK.
5. Don't just draw one line. Draw the same diagonal direction gently, repeatedly, at least ten times and more. It's a *feeling* you are after here.
6. Does a vertical or horizontal direction intersect it anywhere? If so, draw it and carefully note how it intersects the diagonal.
7. Remember to relax your fingers, wrist, elbow and shoulder.
8. The diagonal direction takes you into the picture plane space. While the paper is flat, the mental space you are creating makes you believe the picture is 3-dimensional. This is so cool. As you develop trust in your eye's ability to see and your hand's ability to draw what your eye sees, you will amaze yourself with a rapidly increasing drawing skill!



Can you see how diagonal directions take you into the picture and make you believe it is 3D?

That's it! Come back and do this exercise again and again. See pages 36-37 of my book, "Drawing as a Sacred Activity" for more about this exercise.

Final Note: One further idea that might bear fruit for you is to journal for a few minutes about where and when you feel divergent or different from others. And describe how that feels to you.