**CHAPTER II: ON DRAWING, or THE ART OF DRAWING.**

**The Second Chapter.**

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| 1. One may call Drawing, or the exalted  art of Drawing, the Father of painting;[[1]](#endnote-1)  and one can also praise it as the right path,  or the door which opens to many Arts: fol. 8v  goldsmithing, building, and more. Indeed,  the seven liberal Arts could not live without her;  for the art of drawing, which embraces all things,  holds all the Arts in her measured bonds.[[2]](#endnote-2) | Drawing, the father of good painting, or: drawing is the Body and painting is its Soul. |
| 2. She is a generous Nurse of all the arts,  as *Natalis Comes* tells us.[[3]](#endnote-3)  Yes, likewise noble and instructive *Grammar,*  was raised by her and swiftly grew,  learning from her to recognize letters and symbols  so that People of different languages  harmoniously grasp one another’s intentions,  whether they are near or far. | Painting, which exists in drawing, is the nurse of all great arts and sciences. |
| 3. The Perfection of the art of Drawing must derive  from a solid intelligence, and the intelligence  must be built up through practice  and sustained by a natural spirit,  which is nobly skilled at enrichment,  and by quick attentiveness.  Thus with good judgment the Artist creates in his mind  a design of everything he is pleased to sketch by hand.[[4]](#endnote-4) | The art of Writing is nursed by that of Drawing. |
| 4. This Father of Painting is a remarkable  expression for uncovering and Clarifying  hidden ideas–indeed, the witness  to the intention, **which consists**  **steadily** in tracing, sketching and defining,  to capture everything in the World  in the range of our vision, especially  the Human figure, most magnificent creation. | What Drawing, or the art of Drawing, truly is. |
| 5. Now Youngsters, to pursue this goal, that is,  to become competent in the art of Drawing,  you must begin, with great dedication,  at the oval, and drawing the cross within it;  to learn to draw a face deftly  from all sides, very important: it is disgraceful  that one sees many painters misalign the face,  laboring in vain because they ignore the cross. | Very important to understand the oval and the cross. |
| 6. Further, there is no shame in learning from other works  to place a figure in the proper stable position, without faltering,  on one foot, where the weight of the body rests,  as described in the chapter on *Pose*:  let the hip swing over the standing foot.[[5]](#endnote-5)  Now we would be very grateful to a great Master  If he had published on your behalf, O youths,  an illustrated ABC book introducing our Art. | There ought to be a Book as an introduction for young Painters, for learning to place a Figure with ease, and thus leading to greater perfection. |
| 7. I stand here without means, unfit for the task;  but others who have sufficient powers  are unwilling. I fear the censure  and they, the effort. So, honorable Youth,  you remain deprived of a useful thing.  In the old days, now long gone,  our art was contained in several books  that one now would search for in vain. |  |
| 8. In Books, Youths in School learn  the seven liberal Arts; young Apothecaries  and Surgeons are taught sufficiently  through writings and books not to make mistakes.  Yet for you, young Painters, there was nothing reliable  in our language, to fill you like new Vessels  with useful, edifying substance,  from which you can preserve a strong scent. | In earlier times there was nothing written in our language for the instruction of Painters. |
| 9. Therefore, first it would be good to find  a good Master, to acquire a good style,[[6]](#endnote-6)  and to learn thoroughly the solid foundations  in design, execution, outlining, modeling,  and the placement of light and shadows  first with Charcoal then with Chalk or Pen,  to draw the light places delicately so one can hardly see them,  and to press harder where the shadows fall. | It is useful for students to start with a good Master.  Draw the light parts gently. |
| 10. You may do anything, hatching and washes,  according to the inclination of your mind.  With fiery effort you must train your hand  by copying in Charcoal and Chalk on ash grey  or pale blue Paper in order to highlight  and darken. But take care not to let  the highlights and darks touch each other;  keep the ground color between the two. | Drawing on colored paper is very beneficial to highlights and darkening.  Do not bring highlights and darkening next to each other. |
| 11. Be diligent and avoid using too much highlight.  When you use colored inks or wash,  always try for a soft blending.  Or when you work with charcoal and chalk, keep a wad  of cotton nearby,[[7]](#endnote-7) until the middle tones  blend on both sides, whether you work from prints  or from immovable plaster casts.[[8]](#endnote-8)  Everyone likes to work as he is inclined. | Mezzotint is prepared colored ground, or half tone. |
|  | It is good to work from prints or other methods using darkening and highlights,  as well as from plaster casts.  Highlight has a strong effect in drawing. |
| 12. Good prints with ground tints and effective highlights  have opened the eyes of many a mind;  for example, those of the renowned *Parmigianino*[[9]](#endnote-9)  and others. Thus, in order to be fruitful in art,  graft to your spirit such crops as these;  Or work after something good cast in plaster,  and note well how you place the fall of light,  because the highlights are very expressive. |  |
| 13. When through patient practice, you have made  your hand loose without being labored,[[10]](#endnote-10)  and your eyes begin to gain insight,  then go from design[[11]](#endnote-11) to reality, that is, to life,  which is most beneficial to us,  in which an easy grace, simple and direct,  is manifested in both stillness and motion.  Let it be your Lodestar, guiding the ship. | One must work a great deal from life. In life there is a sure, simple ease. |
| 14. This is the target to aim for, the foundation for building.  No Text is better to quote,  no example is surer and finer to trust,  than the perfect nudity of Man and Woman.  The most learned Booksto study  are this: to practice them endlessly,  as well as nudes of Children, and all Animals.  Otherwise it will be impossible to draw.[[12]](#endnote-12) | Life: the guiding star, foundation stone, and goalof Painting.[[13]](#endnote-13) |
| 15. It is astonishing what grace one sees  Nature pour forth in all directions. Here,  to our delight, can be found everything  we might lack: gestures, composition,  good foreshortening, contour, and substance.  Through much working and reworking, over a long time,  one becomes experienced as a worthy Master  But one must also learn to work from memory. | In life one finds everything.  One must work from memory to acquire invention. |
| 16. Invention must also develop from youth,  otherwise we would compose poorly,  and then would have to consult another person’s work.[[14]](#endnote-14)  We must also pay attention to proportion  as we enlarge or decrease,  and especially we must remember  what we draw, to gain more wisdom.  For you see, *Memory* is the mother of the *Muses*. | Memoria, mother of the Muses, named Mnemosyne; see Plutarch in his *De liberis educandis*.[[15]](#endnote-15) |
| 17. Further, it is the treasure-house of knowledge.  But as you copy,[[16]](#endnote-16) pay attention  to placing your model correctly,  for many a Painter has committed an error  by placing it too high, too low, or too close.  Some use screens and nets,  Or frames with threads stretched cross-wise, Dürer engraving  In order to prevent faults in copying. | The model–that is, the nude–which one plans to copy, should not be placed too close. |
| 18. This is the *Veil* which I pass over in my chapter on composition,  although I want to leave anyone free  to use it, or any other materials;  for it matters not how one wants to bring his work  to grace and to correct proportion.  Further, it greatly benefits the art of drawing  to have a good understanding  of where the Muscles begin or end  by observing corpses being flayed.[[17]](#endnote-17) | This veil is a frame with threads strung in rows, which one also draws on the paper  to place the model correctly, seeing it through the veil. |
| 19. It is absolutely necessary to comprehend  the entirely of the nude figure, in every aspect,  though in so doing, one must make sure  not to depict the Muscles or Sinews  too starkly; otherwise our Figures will seem  to waste away from scrawniness.  One should not thoughtlessly neglect  the plump and smooth softness of a living body. | Muscles must be understood, but little in movement, unless appropriate. |

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| 20. You can stump–that is, spread chalk with a cotton swab–  or gently work it into a fine grain  without hatching, or rub it with something.  If you want to improve your art of hatching,  let your lines increase from thin to heavy,  that is, draw them from the top down,  taking care to portray the muscles or other things  as if all the *Graces* are there at play.[[18]](#endnote-18) | Make hatch marks from above. |
| 21. Pastels are made with various pigments  mixed with Glue which is half-spoiled.[[19]](#endnote-19)  With these one can mimic the shapes of nature;  indeed, one can represent color in all figures  whether youthful or dead.  This will bring you honor,  because the art of drawing is the father of painting:  No two things can be closer together. | Pastels: how they are made.  Pastels are useful for depicting color from life. |
| 22. In sum, the art of Drawing can be useful  to all estates, whether young or old,  indeed, princes, generals and soldiers,  whether to speak of art with knowledge in these matters  or to indicate fortifications and towns.  Therefore the noble art of drawing is to be praised,  from which we will continue to Proportion. | The art of drawing is useful for princes, generals and soldiers for indicating cities and fortifications; see in the first volume of The Lives of the Painters how Lucius Scipio. The bother of Scipio Africanus, depicted the conquest of Carthage.[[20]](#endnote-20) |

**END OF THE ART OF DRAWING**

1. Quoting Vasari I, 43. Vasari calls drawing the father of architecture, sculpture and painting; as Miedema points out, VM extends the arts to seven. Miedema 425. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The term *matighe stringhen* literally means “moderate strands.” I chose “measured” to echo the double meaning of “measurable” and “moderate,” while “bonds” can refer to the reins of self-control as well as perimeter lines. As Miedema comments, VM is evoking the allegory of self-control. Miedema 425. **Change?** [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. “Quis enim audeat ipsam picturam omnium bonarum atrium alumnam…” Natalis Comes, *Mythologiae,* Frankfurt, 1581, 785. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalis_Comes> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Compare Vasari I, 43 [Miedema 427] [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. VM is referring to *contrapposto*, the standard format for depicting a standing figure. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Miedema 430 on VM’s term *manier* and “*maniera*”, etc. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Literally, a stick or shaft of cotton. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. On working with plaster casts: Miedema 434 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Miedema notes the influence of Parmigianino’s prints, transmitted via Bartholomeus Spranger, on the art milieu of the Prague and Vienna courts. Miedema II, 434 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Vasari I, 44. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. VM’s term is *versiering*, ornament or design. **Translator’s note. Put in glossary?** [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. “versieren” again - drawing as design and ornament. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. VM’s term is *schiet-wit,* target or bulls-eye. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Literally, another person’s stock. VM uses the metaphor of a vineyard - i.e. using another vintner’s stock. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. # Plutarch, Moralia 9 E. Plvtarchi Chaeronensis quae extant opera, cum latina interpretatione ... Geneva, Henr. Stephanus, 1572 12 vols, I, 7.

    [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. VM’s term is *conterfeyten*, which is imitation, copying, mimicking. See Mediema 435-36 on this term and its uses and history. **Add earlier, when first used in book?** [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. See *The Nude and the Norm* (and other sources) on learning anatomy through the use of an ecorché and other techniques. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. That is, beautifully. The Graces (*Gratien)* refers to three minor goddesses of Greek mythology known as the *charites* or graces*,* namedAglaea ("Splendor"), Euphrosyne ("Mirth"), and Thalia ("Good Cheer") representing various aspects of inspiration, creativity and pleasure. They are traditionally depicted as three standing female nudes, embracing or with arms linked, often with the center figure facing the opposite direction. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. VM’s word is Lijm. **Check this.** [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. VM *Lives 21v - 22r,* after Pliny *Nat. Hist.* xxxv, 22-23. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)