

Five Loosening-up Exercises for Artists

Before painting

Stretch your back, shoulders and arms. Fill your lungs, drop your shoulder blades and open your chest. Repeat at least 3 times.

Now, pick two of the following exercises to do:

1. Splatter water on a sheet of cartridge paper. With one dark colour watercolour or ink, sketch something you can see. Use only one brush and a stick to make marks and fill at least 75% of the width of the paper with the shapes.
2. Draw your favourite subject on a large sheet of paper using your non-dominant hand. Expect it to be wild and wobbly. That's fine.
3. Create a non-figurative composition using a range of large and small shapes. Use a different colour for each shape and a different tonal value for each size. Set yourself a time limit of 10 minutes.
4. Splatter water on a large sheet of cartridge paper. Using a water soluble pencil (e.g. graphite, watercolour or ink-tense) take a line for a walk anywhere on the paper. Make as many different types of line as possible without lifting the pencil from the page. See how the line changes as it travels through the wet areas on the paper.
5. Using the biggest paintbrush you have, paint your coffee mug in as few brushstrokes as possible. Paint it as big as possible.

Happy Painting!