

Florence A.C.M. Program

Borgo San Frediano, 68

Florence 50124

Tel. 055 285102

Class Schedule

Classes are held on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5.00 to 7.00 pm. These sessions are devoted to drawing from the figure model and the cast. On Thursday evenings Charles Cecil gives a series of lectures on the evolution of painting technically and aesthetically from the early Renaissance. ACM students are encouraged to attend.

Curriculum

The teaching methods used at the Studio stem directly from the leading ateliers of 19th-century Paris. Charles Cecil was first trained in these techniques by R. H. Ives Gammell of Boston whose teacher William Paxton studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Your tutors have all been trained at the Charles H. Cecil Studios. After this semester in Florence your drawing and observational skills will have dramatically improved and you will be equipped with a fundamental visual understanding that will serve you well in any field of art you choose to follow. The week of the course will be an introduction to the sight-size method, whereby the artist stands back at a distance in order to see the drawing and the subject to the same scale.

Figure Drawing

The model will adopt a single pose for the three sessions of the first week. Working in pencil on under life-size projects, students have ample time for the study of shapes and proportion, values and modelling. Pencil encourages students in the use of line and the exploration of shading techniques. There will be a second, slightly longer, project later in the course.

Cast Drawing

The projects will involve working from plaster casts in charcoal on the scale of life. Drawing from the cast enables students to analyze shape and proportion in relation to the effects of light and shade. Charcoal is a painterly medium ideally suited to larger scale drawings and the rendering of mass through tone, or values.

In addition to the classes at the studio, you are expected to keep a sketchbook, which will be evaluated regularly. The subject of the sketches may include drawings of buildings, monuments, statues, landscapes, portrait studies, or sketches from the life model.

Sketch Class

The studio runs open life-drawing sessions on Tuesday evenings from 6.45pm to 8.45pm. The short poses - from between five to twenty minutes - compliment the sustained class work. They offer an opportunity to transcribe the essentials of proportion, gesture and the effects of light. It is recommended that you take advantage of the sketch class for the sketchbook assignment. Sketches can be made in pencil, pen and ink, sanguine, pastel and other media.

On the Sight-Size Technique

The first step in the atelier training is to draw accurately from nature. Using the sight-size technique, students are taught to stand back from the easel and model in order to depict the subject to scale in a proportion true to life. In this way, from the very beginning, students learn to see the image as a whole through the understanding of proportion, chiaroscuro and modeling. Because the subject and image are seen to scale at all times, sight-size is an excellent way to train the eye. It encourages a 'big look' and contributes to a philosophy of seeing whereby the appearance of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Sight-size has its origins in the Renaissance treatises of Alberti and Leonardo da Vinci, although it is principally associated with portraiture.. The technique will be fully explained and continually applied during class.

Grading

This is an introductory class to sight-size, thus a certain level of skill or experience is not a prerequisite. Your grading will be primarily based upon the figure and cast drawings completed in class as well, as the sketchbook assignment. Your attainment, progress and engagement with the course will be the principal factors that decide your final grade.

Required Reading

Nicholas Beer, *Sight-size Portraiture*, Crowood Press, (Ramsbury, 2010)

Harold Speed, *The Practice and Science of Drawing*, (London, 1913)

Materials

Your instructors will ensure you have the required materials for each project. You do not need to bring anything (just some cash on the first day of each project, never more than ten euro). However if you already have the following materials they may prove useful:

HB, 2B, 3B and 4B Pencils, kneaded erasers and paper (Fabriano Ingres for pencil drawing,

Fabriano Roma for charcoal drawing) can be purchased at the Cartoleria San Frediano, which is close to the Studio.

Nitram charcoal is available in three grades H, HB and B (hard, medium and soft). It can be purchased from Cartoleria Lory (Piazza Frescobaldi 8/r) and Zecchi.

Drawings can be stored at the studio until the end of the course. They should be fixed before they are stored to prevent smudging. The Studio will supply fixative. The best and most practical way to take them home is in a cardboard or plastic tube.

Art Shops in Florence

Opening hours: Monday to Friday: 8.30 – 12.30, and 15.30 – 17.30; Saturdays: 8.30 - 12.30

Zecchi

Via dello Studio 19/r

Tel. 055 211470

Rigacci

Via dei Servi 71/r

Tel. 055 216206

Lory

Piazza Frescobaldi 8/r

Tel. 055 213246

www.fornitureufficio.org