

You're a Natural!

Brenda Hoddinott



Many aspiring artists simply jump into drawing without taking the time to discover their natural hand movement. As a matter of fact, most people don't even know they have one! This section explores the natural hand movement of Leonardo da Vinci, and helps you find yours.

This project is divided into the following three parts:

- Leonardo the Leftie
- Finding Your Natural Hand Movement
- Rotating Your Paper as You Draw

Suggested drawing supplies include a sketchbook and a 2B grade of graphite pencil.

Recommended for artists of all ages, as well as students of home schooling, academic and recreational fine art educators

4 PAGES – 4 ILLUSTRATIONS



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LEONARDO THE LEFTIE

You can tell a lot about artists by examining their art. A few years ago, I took the time to check out some of Leonardo da Vinci's drawings. I found myself in awe of his shading lines - mostly drawn at the same angle.

I used a graphite pencil to render a study of one of Leonardo's pen-and-ink drawings.



Figure 801: This drawing of an old man (including the marks and age spots on the paper) is copied from a drawing by Leonardo.

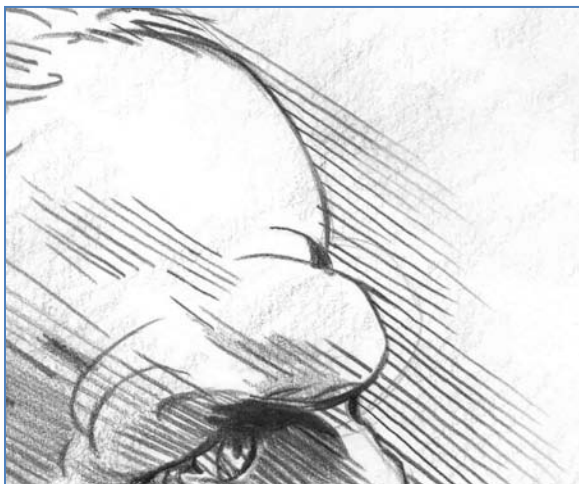


Figure 802: Leonardo's shading lines appear to be rendered from the upper left to lower right, and from the lower right to the upper left.

ArtSpeak

Straight line provides the shortest connection between any two points. Straight lines can be drawn in any direction.

Hatching is a shading technique (made popular during the Renaissance) that consists of a series of lines (called a set) drawn closely together to give the illusion of values.

As an Aside

Some experts claim that Leonardo da Vinci was left-handed because of the way he drew straight lines (at an angle from the upper left to lower right).

This is the natural hand movement of many left-handed artists. Right-handed artists (like me) often draw lines from the upper right to the lower left.

Quote

The artist ought first to exercise his hand by copying drawings from the hand of a good master.

(Leonardo da Vinci)

FINDING YOUR NATURAL HAND MOVEMENT

You natural hand movement may not be the same as either Leonardo's or mine.

Try your hand at drawing sets of slanted straight lines in your sketchbook. Pay attention to how you make these lines. Use many different ways of moving your pencil or changing the slant of your lines. Some will feel comfortable and others will feel awkward.

However, there will be one motion that feels the most comfortable. This is your natural hand movement, and you should try to use it to your advantage whenever possible.

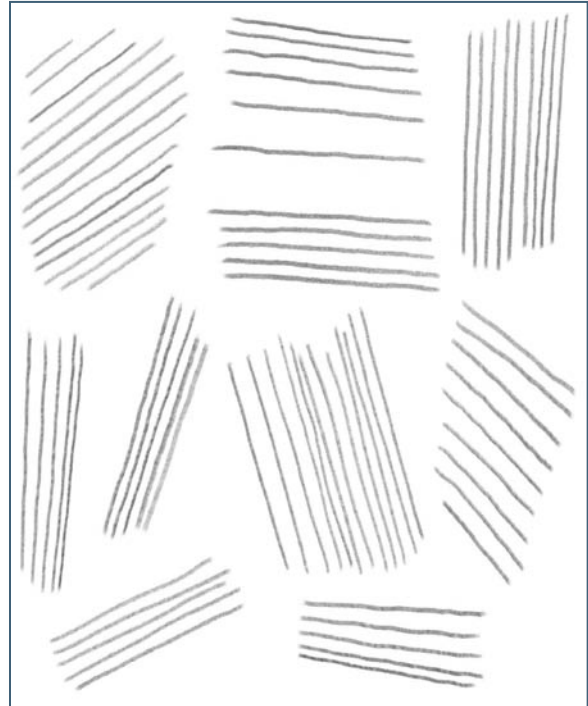


Figure 803: A sketchbook page is filled with straight lines that slant in many directions. My natural hand movement is the set of lines in the upper left. By the way, sets of lines such as these are called hatching.

ROTATING YOUR PAPER AS YOU DRAW

Professional artists have many secret ways to make sure their drawings turn out well. In addition to using their natural hand movement, they often rotate their paper.

You should rotate your drawing paper as you work to take full advantage of your natural hand movement.

Remembering to always rotate your paper takes lots of practice. But, before you know it, you are rotating your paper all the time without even thinking about it.

Sign your name, write today's date on the back of your sketchbook page, and put a smile on your face!



Figure 804: I turned this drawing sideways as I worked so I could imitate Leonardo's lines with my own natural hand movement.



BRENDA HODDINOTT

As a self-educated teacher, visual artist, portraitist, forensic artist (retired), and illustrator, Brenda Hoddinott utilizes diverse art media including her favorites: graphite and paint.

Brenda is the author of *Drawing for Dummies* (Wiley Publishing, Inc., New York, NY) and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Drawing People* (Winner of the Alpha-Penguin Book of the Year Award 2004, Alpha - Pearson Education – Macmillan, Indianapolis, IN). She is currently writing two books on classical drawing.

My philosophy on teaching art is to focus primarily on the enjoyment aspects while gently introducing the technical and academic. Hence, in creating a passion for the subject matter, the quest for knowledge also becomes enjoyable.

>Brenda Hoddinott<

Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, Brenda grew up in the small town of Corner Brook. She developed strong drawing and painting skills through self-directed learning.

During her twenty-five year career as a self-educated civilian forensic artist, various criminal investigation departments have employed Brenda's skills, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In 1992, Brenda was honored with a commendation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in 1994, she was awarded a Certificate of Membership from "Forensic Artists International".

In 2003, Brenda retired from her careers as a forensic artist and teacher to work full time writing books and developing her website (Drawspace.com). This site is respected as a resource for fine art educators, home schooling programs, and educational facilities throughout the world.