

Center Line Workshop, 2020

- **Intro: why are we interested in doing this?**
 - To start with good proportions?
 - Getting good at proportions is a complex endeavour that requires a diverse skill set. This is exactly why we can benefit from simplifying our subject. We can also benefit from standardising our process. The center line based block in does both of these things. It plays on a basic fact about the human form, namely that it is essentially symmetrical. By indicating the centre line at the start of the drawing we can lay the foundation for all the symmetrical structures to come.
 - To have control over the arrangement of the features. Drawing relies so much on visual memory. From the time it takes to look at the model (or source image) and then look back to our drawing we can lose a lot of information. The center line is a kind of armature that will remind us of the placement of the information that we have just found while studying our subject. This armature is held together by a the logical connection of vertical and horizontal axes. To put it more simply, it is reliable.
 - Who developed the first version? historical examples?
 - Many artists in the past have used variations on this idea. In fact you could say that it is less of a technology and more of a generally accepted truth that individuals will negotiate as the see fit.
 - John Vanderpoel
 - George Bridgeman
 - Andrew Loomis
- **What is the "centre line?"**
 - It's a tool.
 - What is the most basic version of this tool?
 - At it's most simplified, the center line is there to assist the artist in the early stages of the drawing to indicate the twist, tilt, and basic form of the head. In this way quite effectively allows you to draw a head that is seemingly 3 dimensional without taking very much effort at all.

- What is the most simple way to understand it?
 - It is there to show structural symmetry. The body, and thus the head, are structurally symmetrical subjects. This quality is at the heart of a useful block in and, eventually, also in a finished study. By aligning its self with certain landmarks, mostly skeletal, the center line indicates this quality from a very early stage.
 - It is a guide not a factual certainty. The center line is a theoretical tool and therefore isn't visible to the eye. However, the features of the body and head that it is lined up along are a factual certainty.
 - It is a way to control the placement of the features of the head. The beginning of a drawing can be quite a chaotic stage. This template for the head is a great way to clarify and give a greater purpose to the first marks that you will make on the paper. After that, it can be used as much or as little as you feel necessary to continue to stay in control of your drawing.

- **How does it become more complex?**
 - At its inception, and if developed further, it will show the form of the axis that it lies upon. This is a feature of this tool that I don't often hear discussed in conversations about it. Without values we have a very limited capability to indicate this aspect of a subject, especially early on. Should you choose to pursue it, the center line can be repeated across the form to create the vertical axes of a 3D wireframe model.
 - Attaching the most lateral features to the center line of the head. The structure that is shown by the center line can also be connected to various horizontal axes to help indicate a foreshortening along the brow ridge, for instance. This is also applicable to the nose, mouth, cheekbones, front plane of the head, etc...
 - It is a fundamental "point of truth" that you can always refer back to. Because it is developed from a fundamental truth about the human body it can be relied upon to be relatively true. In this way it is helpful in the later, more complex, stages of the drawing. While developing value, for instance, a drawing can lose slightly its structure. By reintroducing the center line and
 - Shows more complex plane shifts along with the development of complexity in the drawing
 - Expands and repeats outward from the center line to form the vertical lines of a wire frame...

- **What different places does it apply?**
 - Human figure
 - Starting with the pit of the neck and running down to the navel and ending in the pubic symphysis
 - Portraiture
 - Running down the middle of the forehead through the glabella and onward through the philtrum and then down past the mental process.
 - Drawing, painting, sculpture...
 - It can be applied across all media.
- Are there other similar methods?
 - Reilly, Loomis, etc...
- **Does it relate to anatomy?**
 - Do you need anatomical knowledge to make it work?
 - No, but it will become more meaningful and useful the more anatomy that you know. As you practice with this tool, looking for various landmarks across the form of the body you will invariably encounter significant bony, muscular and fatty features. The more familiar you are with them the better you will be able to assign the points of symmetry needed to relate them to the other side of the subject.
 - Can it help you learn anatomy?
 - Yes. Learning how to use anatomy in your drawings and paintings is partly about being able to finding a way to integrate it into your mark making. We can also call this aligning the anatomical knowledge with the lines and values that you put onto your paper. This center line concept gives you a way to create a connection between your theoretical knowledge and the practical endeavour of drawing or painting.
- **Where do we start to use it?**
 - In the first moment of the drawing
 - Before the head that we are drawing looks like a head we are left searching around with our eyes to find some way to compare it to the model. Our drawing is, at this point, essentially abstract. Rather than rushing ahead into values to help this problem of comparison we can use the center line to start bridging this gap. It can be made as simple or as complex as you like depending on your level of expertise using it.

- **Showing and talking about the process** (this section is for me)
 - Start with the head
 - nose
 - mouth
 - eye
 - forehead
 - etc... others?
 - Show how it applies to the figure.
 - Go into historical artworks to show how they adhere to this tool...
 - Talk about and show what features, anatomical and otherwise, that the edges of planes line up with...

- **How to improvise with it...**
 - More simple versions.
 - Egg shapes: left, center, right
 - Leaving out the changing plane of the nose.
 - More complex versions
 - Integrating the changing planes of the forehead, nose, lips, and chin.
 - Connecting the glabella, brow ridge, cheekbones, corners of the mouth, naso-labial folds,
 - Expand out from the center line laterally and show the wireframe idea...
 - What are the planes of the head?
 - What are planes to begin with?
 - The planes of the head are a simplification of the more complex form of the head that help us to understand better the form and thus the values that will reveal the form.
 - How are planes motivated by value?
 - The values that occupy planes can be understood by estimating their disposition and proximity to the light source. Is the plane facing toward or away from the light source? Is the plane close to or far away from the light source? These questions can be asked and answered both individually and/or collectively about a plane (or planes) in order to help organise the light effect in a drawing.

- **Other applications?**
 - using it in painting
 - using it in sculpting