

Introduction

Hi, My name is Alice Russell and I am currently studying for my Art and Design A-Level at KEVI, Morpeth. We have been given the task of writing a personal study on an artist. As I was enthralled by Mark Demsteader's work; his use of tone, light and texture; I decided to complete my study on him

I first saw Mark Demsteader's work when I was looking on a website: Art Group. Demsteader's work and his natural looking emotive pictures immediately captivated me.

Demsteader creates a powerful portrayal of the human body in pure, assured lines of charcoal and gouache. His work has sparked a new interest in traditional life drawing. Demsteader's vast technical ability is reflected in the natural sensitivity with which he imbues each of his pieces. Although secluded in the picture plane, each model seems to live and breathe; their expression and poise convey a sense of narrative that invites the viewer to ask more questions about them.

Mark Demsteader was born in 1963 in Manchester where he still lives and works. He studied at Rochdale College and Oldham College before taking up a postgraduate position at the Slade School of Art in London. In a long and varied career his drawings have won several awards including The Lyceum Prize and The Sidney Andrews Scholarship. In recent years Mark's reputation has grown rapidly, and he has become one of the most well-known and popular figurative artists working in Britain today.

Demsteader uses pastel, collage sometimes with gouache to create an enthralling and inspiring piece of artwork, engaging the viewers with the black and white contrast of chalk and charcoal. The figures are not strong defined shapes but curvaceous, effortlessly portraying the human form. I think that the black and white colours create such a contrast that it immediately captures the viewers' eye and creates an aesthetically pleasing piece. The background of these portraits are plain and simple monochrome shade background which makes the figure appear dominating and the colour emphasises their shape, outlined in black.

In this study I am going to look at multiple pieces of Demsteader's work analyse his techniques, use of light, texture, colour, shapes and compare his work to various other artists such as Daniel Cullen.

Demsteader incorporates many elements of style in his work. He has a very unique style (which is one of the reasons I was attracted to his work to begin with) which is emphasised in the way he uses the lines with pastels, his use of light and monochromatic colour scheme.

In profile (right) is one of Demsteeper's many pieces of work. I particularly like how Demsteeper supplies the faces of the model with such detail, but also how it contrasts with the simplistic outline at the bottom of the picture. Demsteeper demonstrates this concept in a lot of his pieces which successfully creates a powerful image.

Chapter 2

In 'In Profile' (pictured in previous slide) the development from white to black, in my opinion brings the model to life, they look very natural and Demsteeper manages to capture vitality in his models due to the effortless tone and composition of the drawing. I think the grayscale colour scheme of this piece (the same as many of Demsteeper's figurative drawings) forms a dominating portrayal of this woman. The composition of Demsteeper's pieces are very simplistic as it is just the female model, however the model is very dominating as the drawing is so close up which in itself engages the viewers. I really like this drawing; there is a great depth created in this drawing by Demsteeper's use of light and shadow especially focusing around the eyes and the shadow on the collarbone from the head.



Again, here we see Demsteeper demonstrating his preference to produce work in black and white; the two opposite contrasting colours provide a strong silhouette of the models body, collectively with the plain background has a very dramatic impact on viewers. And as in most of Demsteeper's work he focuses a lot of detail on the woman's head and shoulders. In this particular piece of work I love the attention to highlighting the models arms and the immediate contrast to the dark black. The sweeping lines of the hair are eruptive and spontaneous as are the few casual lines of shadow on the woman's legs and stomach.

Personally, I really like this drawing; I love how Demsteader uses layers of black and white to create a detailed depiction of his model. It is clear, by looking at Demsteader's work that he had a deep understanding of structure and anatomy and he illustrates this understanding through his innovative drawings.

Copying a piece of Demsteader's work

To try and entirely understand Mark Demsteader's work I decided to copy a piece of his work that I particularly admired; I chose to copy 'Drawing 2' in chalk and charcoal. To the right is Demsteader's original copy of this piece and my copy of this is shown on the following slide.

Attempting to copy a piece of Demsteader's work really demonstrated to me how difficult it is to draw such an accurate portrayal of a person. I now appreciate a lot more, how much time must be put into each piece of Demsteader's work to achieve the outcome he does. I am not very pleased with my copy of 'Drawing 11' as I don't feel I managed to draw the shapes of her face as accurately as they needed to be and that my shading wasn't in depth enough. I think to improve my drawing; I think I needed to create more of a contrast between the black and white sections of light and shadow on the model's body.

Daniel Cullen

Daniel Cullen is a professional artist working from a studio in Nottingham. However, he has never attempted to publish his own work until quite recently. He's been drawing since he was a child and had the opportunity to, with resources available to his as his mother is a sculptor with a studio in her home.

Figure studies have been central to Cullen's work and he uses his medium to establish a certain mood or atmosphere or capture a particular moment. The technical skill in what he draws is incredible with such precision in his drawings.

I chose to investigate Cullen as well as Mark Demsteader because I think in some respects they both have a very similar style however in other ways they contrast greatly. Both artists have the shared interest of using a female model as their focal point and drawing their faces in great detail.

Similarities

Both artists use a monochromatic colour scheme in the majority of their work, I think this makes their portrayal of a simple image of a woman's face appear shapely and elegant. They both share the ability to capture the spirit of their subject through their use of colour, shading and precision.

In the same way as Demsteader, Cullen works mainly with charcoal and chalk on paper however, they do differ in media Demsteader often uses strokes of gouache on his work whereas Cullen often uses a wash of watercolour beneath the drawing to add body.

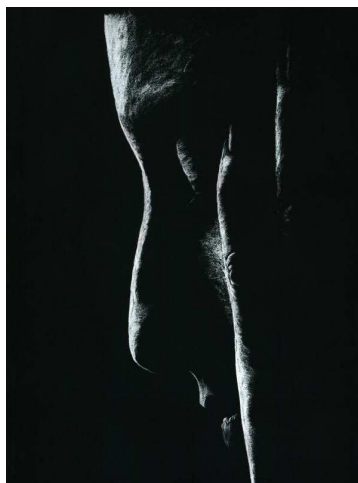
Demsteader and Cullen both use draw their models from similar perspectives; they have their models face at an angle, generally looking down at a 45°, especially apparent when comparing Cullen's 'Pensive' and Demsteader's 'Looking Down I' or 'Vicky I'

Differences

I believe that Cullen, to some extent, works with more realism than Demsteader, both artists successfully produce a realistic portrayal of the female form; however their pieces of work look quite different from each other in terms that Cullen's detail is a lot finer than Demsteader's work, as when he incorporates gouache into his pieces, uses quite thick brush strokes.

Even though both artists use a monochromatic colour scheme in their work, however, they still differ very subtly; Demsteader's work is greyscale and only uses black and white however Cullen's has a sepia tone and uses slight traces of creams and warm browns.

Richard Young



Richard Young is a British artist, born in Yorkshire in 1961, and now based in North Devon, UK where he has an office and studio.

Though he usually worked with pencil and chalk to produce his work drawing, he began oil painting around the age of 12. Young studied hard and developed a talent, he practiced in his spare time and later enjoyed early regional competition success and media publicity for his work in the North of England. His skill was recognized by his tutors and encouraged him to undertake both Ordinary and Advanced level art exams a few years early, Young passed with the top grades. Being financially driven in 1983, Young graduated in engineering and wanting to travel, he did become a design consultant for some time however, was an artist at heart and he returned to Commercial Art. Young became a professional freelance artist, and developed artistry and his own personal style through self tuition. He displayed his artwork on his website, in galleries, magazine publications, shows and exhibitions and has recently been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts.

Young is a member of: Royal Society for Arts, Fine Art Trade Guild and Design and Artists Copyright Society.

Similarity

Both artists use the same subject matter of the human body – both mainly using female models

Difference

Despite the fact that both artists have the same subject matter of the human form, a lot of Young's work is done on black paper whereas the Demstader's drawings are done on white. The illusion of the drawing is completely changed just by the colour of the paper; Young's work on the black paper creates almost an element of mystery by a lot of the model in shadow.

Both Artists use pastel to create their drawing of their models; however they both use it in such a different way, because the texture of the different models skin presented so differently. Demstader's shading is appears a bit more spontaneous whereas Young's looks more designed. Young's uses of pastel also, makes the skin look a bit more uneven compared to Demstader's.

