

Blind Contour

& patterns



'Before you are able to draw, you have to learn to see, and you learn to see by drawing.'

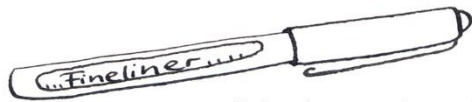
- Mick Maslen

This drawing exercise works best when done in pairs but if you're doing it on your own, just use a mirror (for a self-portrait), a photo of a loved one or find a picture of your favourite celebrity online.

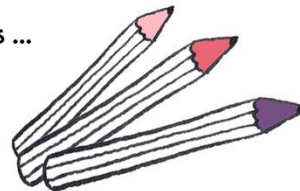
Blind Contour is first and foremost an exercise in seeing. But crucially, it is not about seeing your drawing - in fact, you'll be 'blind' to that for as long as you keep your pen moving. Instead, you are asked to closely observe the person you are drawing, paying attention to all the tiny details.

The best thing? Because you can't see your drawing, you are robbing your inner critic of its fire.

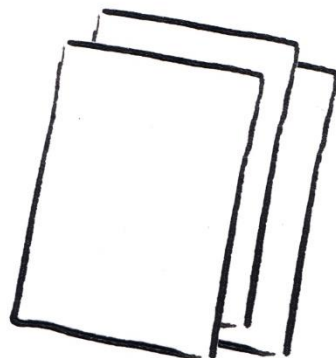
Materials



A fineliner, coloured pencils ...



a timer,



and a few sheets of paper - ideally A5 and a bit thicker than standard copy paper but if copy paper is all you've got, don't let that stop you!

Instructions



Sit opposite your drawing partner or, if you are working alone, grab your mirror or your reference photo (if you can, stick it on the wall so that it's at eye-level).

Set a timer for 10 minutes and then, using your fineliner, begin drawing a portrait.

Don't look at the paper while you are drawing, instead focus on all the tiny details you see - the way the mouth curves, the tiny wrinkle you've never noticed before ...

Work very slowly and without worrying about the outcome. Just let your hand record all the details. Try working in a continuous line, lifting the pen only when absolutely necessary.

Once you're finished, start another drawing right away and keep going until the time is up.

Patterns

When you are done, spread out all your drawings in front of you and pick your favourite. Now go ahead and embellish it with a fun pattern using your coloured pencils.

Drawing simple patterns (think repetitive lines or circles) can have a calming effect because the repetitive movement of your hand helps you to get out of your head and into the present moment. By getting into this flow state, you are allowing your body to trigger its relaxation response - your blood pressure is decreased, your pulse is lowered, and you can breathe easy for a moment.

Tip: If you don't know what to draw, look around you for pattern inspiration: cushions, carpets, your clothes, ... - patterns are everywhere!

