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COURTENAY, B.C.

You can learn to draw – in only eight lessons

Paula Wild

Record Arts

For some, putting pencil to paper and creating an image is as easy as blinking an eye.

For others, a comparable challenge might be the thought of climbing Mount Everest. But for anyone yearning to get in touch with their inner artist, it is possible to learn how to draw — and in only eight classes.

"I was a total beginner ... I thought I saw things correctly until I took Tracy's class — it's amazing how much your mind can distort your perception," says Denise Lawson. "What she taught me has made a big, big difference in my drawing ability."

"Tracy brought out the artist in me ... that was hidden ... very hidden, and that is her talent as a teacher," adds Wink Richardson.

"People are always surprised at how their skill level improves in just eight weeks," says award-winning artist and art instructor Tracy Kobus. Her winter classes, including the popular Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, begin in mid-January.

"Many people have bought the book, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, by Betty Edwards," notes Kobus. "But most admit they didn't get past the first chapter or, if they did, failed to do any of the exercises."

Scientific research shows that the right and left sides of the brain perceive the world in different ways. "The right side is more intuitive and suited to drawing," explains Kobus. "The left side of the brain attempts to thwart a person's artistic efforts. When you use the right side of the brain, you sketch what you see versus what you think something should look like."

"After I retired and started learning about painting, I realized that to paint one first must be able to draw, and drawing isn't the same as drafting an engineering document," says David Netteville. "Tracy taught me that to use the artistic side of the brain, one has to be able to disconnect the logic associated with how we believe things should look and



TRACY KOBUS painted on the Comox Valley Art Gallery plaza during the Get Your Arts Outside promotion during the summer.

simply draw what we see."

"Learning to draw on the right side of the brain challenges you to slow down and observe your world from a new perspective," says Nancy Bey, another of Kobus' students. "It's exciting to see new shapes emerge out of familiar

things we look at or drive by every day — a bowl of fruit, flowers, trees, hydro poles, etc. That's a good skill to have in general, not just for learning to draw."

Kobus employs various techniques to get people drawing with the right side of their brains.

"Drawing something upside-down helps people see the lines and shapes without even knowing what the object is," she says. "People usually draw better when something is upside-down because the left side of the brain isn't interfering."

Another exercise involves blind contour drawing. That means looking at the object the entire time you're drawing it instead of looking at the paper.

"Whenever you're looking at the paper, you're drawing from memory," points out Kobus. "That makes it easy for the left brain to take over."

"It can be hard for people to make the shift to drawing on the right side of the brain," she admits. "They don't believe it will work and sometimes they get stressed out. But when they get it, it's 'Wow — that's cool! I never thought I could do that!'"

Although some students in Kobus' beginner drawing class have some experience, at least half are complete novices. "Sometimes they're terrified," she says. "But they're often the ones that learn the most."

"Tracy's class and encouragement gave me the confidence to progress beyond the first chapter of *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* and to actually put pencil to paper," says Duncan McMaster, who drives all the way from Tofino to study with Kobus. "Tracy's enthusiasm for art is evident throughout her class and inspired us all."

"Tracy is a knowledgeable teacher who is able to break concepts into small steps for the beginner and still challenge the more advanced students," adds Rosilyn King. "I always leave the class with a sense of quiet accomplishment."

Tracy Kobus was born in Barrie, Ont., and moved to the Comox Valley with her family when she was five. After graduating from Highland Secondary, Kobus explored Europe for three years. She then received a bursary for the fine arts program at North Island College and went on to obtain her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of B.C.

Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions and is held in various collections. Kobus began teaching art classes in 1998.

For more information on her classes beginning in January, visit www.tracykobus.com.



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