

**DESERT INSTITUTE**

*at Joshua Tree National Park*

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Fall Session

2020

## Drawing the Natural World with Charcoal and Pastel

### Information

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Date/ Time: Saturday, September 19, from 9 am – 5 pm

Meet at: [Joshua Tree Visitor Center](#) (click on the link for a map to the meeting site)  
6554 Park Blvd., Joshua Tree

Instructor: Monica Lynne Mahoney, Artist, Instructor

### Overview

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Join Joshua Tree based artist Monica L. Mahoney in an immersive field sketching walk-about in the heart of Joshua Tree National Park. Known for her expressive drawing style and knowledge of the native flora of the region, Monica will lead participants on a journey to capture the shapes, forms, and vistas of the natural world using graphite, charcoal, and neutral tone soft pastel. Sharing her wealth of knowledge, Monica will guide a series of moderate and informative natural-history walks in spectacular private locations in search of the objects and vistas that students will choose to draw. Students will explore the power of line quality, shading techniques, and using foreground, middle ground, and background shapes for creating strong, believable landscape compositions. The class is designed for all artistic skill levels and students will be given one-to-one attention as needed. The goal of the workshop is to sharpen our natural observation skills while having fun on the trail and exploring how drawing brings us closer to Nature and ourselves. The skills learned in this class are complimentary to the upcoming watercolor painting workshop on November 21, 2020.

Note that this class will be conducted in and around the reserved Lost Horse Campground which will involve the ability to engage in moderate walking and hiking up to three miles on uneven terrain.\*

### Itinerary

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Saturday, September 19, 9 am – 5 pm

### *Joshua Tree Visitor Center*

- Meet and caravan from the visitor center to Lost Horse Campground, first field exercise
- Introduction in the field
- Field Class exercises in graphite and charcoal
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**
- Field Class exercises, pastel, and optional free drawing time

### **What to Bring to the Course**

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#### ***The 10 Essentials: Every day in the Desert***

- Day pack
- 4 quarts of water
- Closed toe hiking shoes
- Lunch and snacks
- Clothing layers
- Hat
- Sun glasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook and pencil/pen
- Whistle

### **Necessary Art Supplies**

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- **Drawing Pencils such as:** Medium Designer Set of 12 - A range of 12 medium pencils includes one each of 6B, 5B, 4B, 3B, 2B, B, HB, F, H, 2H, 3H, and 4H <https://www.dickblick.com/items/20404-2029/> (great if you prefer more options). **OR** a minimum kit <https://www.dickblick.com/products/derwent-fine-art-pencil-pack/> (adequate and appropriate for field sketching but a bit limited for studio work).
- **Pentel mechanical pencil 0.5 or 0.7** with refillable eraser and HB or 2H lead refill or Mechanical pencil brand of your choice. <https://www.dickblick.com/products/pentel-sharp-mechanical-pencil/>
- **Compressed and Vine Charcoal:** A basic charcoal assortment kit: <https://www.dickblick.com/products/faber-castell-pitt-basic-charcoal-assortment/>
- **Prismacolor NuPastel:** box set of 12 or 24 assorted colors is plenty **OR** individual colors of your choice for a desert palette such as: black, buff, light Naples yellow, light ochre, burnt sienna, raw sienna, burnt umber, corn yellow, light sap green, olive green, pistachio green, light blue, indigo blue, blue haze, cold medium gray, warm medium gray, warm very light gray, and ivory. <https://www.dickblick.com/items/20034-2419/>

- **Mars White Plastic Eraser** (if not already part of a kit)
- **Kneaded Eraser** (if not already part of a kit)
- **Pencil Sharpener or Exacto knife** (important tool to have if not already part of your kit)
- **Chamois** for blending. I prefer leather chamois but a small section (5 x 5 inches is plenty) of a soft automotive polishing cloth or cut up 100% cotton T shirt will work too.  
<https://www.dickblick.com/products/natural-artist-chamois/>
- **Field journal/sketchbook (important!):** Canson Mix Media Art Book 7 in x 10 in 98 lb. with microperforated sheets.(Preferred) <https://www.dickblick.com/items/12468-1022/>

Optional smaller sketchbooks:

- Strathmore Mixed Media 5.5 in x 8.5 in 90 lb. wire bound pads are fine and affordable for experimentation **OR:**
- Prefer the Strathmore hardbound Mixed Media Artist Journal 5.5 inch x 8.5 inch 98 lb or 184 lb. white or tan paper is fine.
- Note on sketchbooks: A 7" x 10" sketchbook is plenty large. The larger the size, the more intimidating they can be, as well as bulky in a day pack.

**A trail chair, camp chair or yoga mat** for comfort to sit on while drawing in the field. Should be easy to pack into/onto your day pack. I use a yoga mat or saddle blanket because they are flexible and light and I can fold them to fit into funky seating areas or on boulders out in the field. Choose your comfort first, especially for the longer exercises. Yucca Valley Marshall's has a variety of affordable yoga mats.

#### **Where to purchase art supplies:**

Highly recommended to order from Blick Art Materials: <https://www.dickblick.com/> for better selection, prices, sales and free shipping deals. Or shop your favorite locally owned art supply store.

#### **Fitness Requirements**

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Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

#### **Hike Level**

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Moderate

#### **Guidelines**

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- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.

- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.

### **Instructor Biography**

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MONICA LYNNE MAHONEY, BFA, studio art, MLA Landscape Architecture, is a multidisciplinary artist, educator and native plant naturalist living and working in Joshua Tree, CA. Mahoney's diverse artistic practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture, landscape design, ecological restoration, writing, and award-winning public engagement and civic art programs that integrate art and the environment. She believes that no matter the skill level, the practice of painting and drawing in nature is a portal into the natural world, which helps us to profoundly connect with the environment—and ourselves—in new and meaningful ways.

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\* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant's needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.